



NOVELS AT TWO SHILLINGS.

By LORENTON.

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GENTLEMAN JACK

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "CAVENDISH"

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Of midnight gales,
But tempt the sea no more."
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GENTLEMAN JACK.

CHAPTER I.

It was in the year 1796, that Augustus Frederic Fitzjohn might have been found wasting his life in that course which has been so mockingly styled "education" at Westminster School. An old schoolfellow, who had been on board a line-of-battle ship in Lord Howe's glorious victory of the 1st of June, returned to spend a few weeks at home, whilst the ship was repairing her damages at one of the royal dock-yards. After the first greetings with his friends were over, he naturally came, with mingled pride and affection, to see which of his old playmates were still in the school.

His description of the life of liberty which a midddy enjoyed, their independence from the discipline of the pedagogue, and, lastly, the glory of having served in that memorable battle, fired many young bosoms, but none so fiercely as that of Fitzjohn, whom it at once decided to relinquish the profession of the church, for which he was intended, and to embrace that of arms.

This decision was in some degree hastened by the accidental occurrence of an incident of rather a warlike nature. A man, at whose door Fitzjohn and his schoolfellows were in the daily habit of mischievously knocking when passing to the cricket-ground, fired out of one of his windows one morning, and wounded a particular "crony" of Fitzjohn in the thigh with some small shot. He immediately fell: being near him at the time, Fitz, with the assistance of some others, carried him behind the scaffolding of a house which was repairing, directly opposite the one from which the shot had been fired.

Here they stowed him away in the back parlour, and, having sent a fag over the garden wall to get a doctor, Fitz

reconnoitred the enemy from the garret window, and clearly observed one man with a cocked gun in his hand, and two other big fellows with bludgeons. This appearance of strength obliged him to relinquish a plan of attack which he had contemplated, by boarding the enemy with cricket-stumps; but his schoolfellows soon arriving in force, he placed his troop, about twenty-six in number, behind the scaffolding below and the parapet of the house aloft.

These, at a given signal, began such a cannonade with the new bricks that had been collected behind the scaffolding for the repairs of the tenement, that in ten minutes the enemy, as well as every pane of glass, had disappeared.

To get in at the broken windows seemed quite impossible, from the sharp edges of the broken panes; while the street-door was bolted and chained. Seeing this, Fitzjohn directed some of the boys to take with them one of the lighter scaffolding ladders from the opposite house; and having mounted, with four others, on the flat portico which overhung the door, he proceeded, like a skilful leader, directing them in the use of the ladder as a battering-ram.

With a few shocks, the door burst open, but the faithful chain still retained its place, though, of course, all the panels and frame-work gave way. Whilst these were battering below, those *on* the portico had not been idle; and, by putting handkerchiefs round their hands and their hats *before* their face, they made way into the drawing-room, which was found quite empty, and the door locked on the outer side. They now distinctly heard the voices of many men on the staircase; and as the poker, shovel, and tongs were left, they soon divided the last into two weapons, and, fearing the enemy might increase in numbers, resolved to fight their way down-stairs.

"Now, my boys," said Fitz, "I'll lead the way. You form a circle round me, and stick to your stuff; while you, P—tt—y, get upon that high oaken stool with the shovel in your hand, and mind you come chop down with it on the head of the first fellow that enters the room;"—for such they distinctly heard from without was the intention of the foe.

This spirited address having been given, it was on the point of being followed up, as soon as the drawing-room door was opened, Fitzjohn standing with the uplifted poker:

when, however, the portal did part, to his utter horror and astonishment, he suddenly found himself in the rude, relentless grasp of the head master of the school, followed by several Bow-street officers.

They lost no time in securing all his companions; while our hero, with his face bleeding in several places from the broken glass, and with the uplifted poker in his hand, was immediately recognised by the master as the leader of the row.

Having been forthwith marched off to the boarding-house, with a broad hint of what he was to expect on the morrow, he very earnestly asked permission to visit his wounded chum, promising most faithfully to return to quarters as soon as he had seen him in safety. To his great astonishment, the master knew nothing of this part of the affair,—for it appears that the man who had fired went immediately afterwards to the master, and told him of the attack, but not one word about the cause of it; and, when Fitzjohn explained the whole to him, instead of bestowing the expected praise, he said, “The civil power will inquire into that part of the affair, but I shall make an example of you in the morning at school;” and Fitz was accordingly locked up.

He managed, however, in the course of the evening, to get out, and found his friend had been taken to a surgeon’s, and from thence to his own house, but was in no danger. As soon as the boarding-house doors were open the next morning, the boys despatched messengers to all the other houses, and to their fellow collegiates, so that he felt pretty sure of raising a mutiny in the event of the head master attempting to punish him.

This conviction was subsequently so far realised, that on the head master taking steps next morning for his punishment, there was a general shout of “He shall *not* be flogged,” and simultaneously every boy stood up upon the form on which he had before been seated.

On this, the masters and ushers all got up, and Fitz walked deliberately out of the school, followed by nearly all the boys.

The result of this *émeute* naturally was the retirement of our hero from school, and then that which he so ardently desired, his entrance into the navy.

CHAPTER II.

FITZJOHN was an only child, and though he had succeeded in emancipating himself from school, he had still a hard battle to win from his reluctant mother—her consent to his actually joining his first man-of-war; at last it was decided that the lady should take her son in her carriage to the Admiralty, where she had great influence.

Accordingly, they drove up to the large portico of the public building in question, and one of the two footmen getting down, called to the carriage-door one of the porters.

“Take my card up to Lord S——r, and tell him I am waiting below,” said her ladyship.

In a minute, another porter shuffled on a large black tasselled stuff robe, and taking a silver-headed cane in his hand, opened the half-swinging glass outer-door to a very gentlemanly man, whom Fitz’s mother designated “My lord.”

She invited him into the carriage, and, after telling him that she came upon a most melancholy errand, he screwed up his visage, and looked as grave as a judge.

Her ladyship seeing that all was ready, proceeded, without loss of time, to descant upon her son’s wicked propensities for a sailor’s life; and, after saying that all her hopes of his future prospects would be blighted, she asked him if he did not think Fitz *too delicate* for a sailor.

As his lordship seemed determined to agree to everything she said, Fitz began to think his object would yet be marred, and therefore told him that he could row and steer, that he was a good swimmer, and that as for delicacy, he never yet had been accused of having any of that, and had moreover fallen overboard into the Thames, and had not caught cold.

To this his mother added—“I do not think the boy wants courage, for he took one of my coach-horses to Tothill-fields’ donkey race with only a halter, and without saddle and bridle, which the coachman says he dared not have done himself.”

Upon this they whispered together, and, after a few moments’ conversation, he got out, and they drove home.

Every day now appeared to Fitz an age; insomuch that

he frequently went down to the Tower, in hopes of being pressed ; but no such luck awaited him. One day, however, he saw a desperate fight between a mob of sailors, and an officer, with four others, armed with bludgeons, who were, what they called, "towing" a man down, that is to say, two of the bludgeon-armed seamen had each hold of a leg of a man who would *not* walk, while his body and head dragged along the ground.

The first idea of Fitz was to assist the man on the ground, but, on being informed that he was a deserter, he offered his assistance to one of the under officers, thereby made his acquaintance, and invited him to dine with him the next day (Sunday) at six o'clock.

This invitation the under officer accepted, and, after remarking upon the lateness of the hour, as he always dined at twelve, said he should "put on his best gang of rigging, and had no doubt he would be able to stow his after-hold again by that time."

At breakfast next morning, Fitz informed his mother of the fact of her being about to entertain an unexpected guest, which she did not seem to relish, but said she was sorry that it had not been some other day, as she was afraid the housekeeper would not be able to get what these seagentlemen liked—salt-beef.

As six o'clock approached, Fitz declined accompanying his mother into the Park, that he might be at home to receive his guest ; and watched every knock at the door with great anxiety. It poured all day with heavy rain, and punctually at the hour his friend arrived.

Fitz heard him say to the footman, as he was squeezing the wet out of his trowsers' legs upon the door-mat, "I say, you soger, take care of my tarpaulin-hat and pea-jacket, as I sha'n't remain long at an anchor here, but must be under weigh again in an hour, for they won't let me alongside after eight."

The footman asked him whom he wanted, and seemed very anxious not to let him make good any farther entrance, upon which Fitz ran down-stairs, and got a friendly squeeze of the fist that nearly jammed three fingers into one ; he then walked his guest up into the drawing-room, and when his mother came down, introduced him.

"But you do not mention the gentleman's name, my

dear," said the lady; and indeed Fitz did not know it himself, so asked him for it.

"Why, it's Jim Bell, for want of a better one," replied the sailor, speaking in a voice like a dying thunder-storm.

He was a man about six-and-thirty years of age, and had been born on board a collier whilst turning up Swin. He had always been at sea, and was at that moment mate of the press-gang, having been about twenty years master's mate, and midshipman, "but he hoped," he said, "if the war lasted long enough, he should be made lieutenant."

Fitz soon found his mother did not much admire her new guest. After sitting some time, he got up and looked into every corner of the room, as Fitz thought, to find something he had lost; but on opening the drawing-room door, on the landing-place, he quickly shut it again, saying,—

"You're all so fine, marm, here, there is no place for an honest cleanly fellow to spit into;" rolling at the same time a quid of tobacco, about the size of a pigeon's egg, in his cheek.

Having thus neatly delivered himself, Jim Bell advanced to the fire-place, which he turned to the use wanted, and then elegantly using as a *mouchoir* the back of his hand, resumed his seat. As for Fitz, his eyes were never off him. He admired the rough voice he spoke in, and the smell of tar that was about his clothes, together with his extremely loose trowser legs, and a large pair of silver buckles in his shoes, so that he determined next morning to set Mr. Snip to work to make him a pair like them: while, for the tobacco and buckles, he also decided on appearing in them at the same time.

At dinner, Fitzjohn and his mother so far contrived to draw out Jim Bell, that he observed that, "As to these small wine-glasses, they don't hold enough to fill a hollow tooth."

After Jim Bell had twice cleared the brandy decanter, the beautiful hostess contrived to get her guest into sundry narratives of the "dangers of the sea," and he said something of a terrific "wreck;" on which the servant departed very prudently for a fresh bottle of old cognac.

Whilst he was under hatches, as Jim called it, he pulled out a pewter watch, about the size of a modern tea-cup.

The face was of metal, and a piece of whipcord, doubled, held a steel seal and key.

"It's past seven bells, marm," said Jim, looking at his ticker, "and I must be under weigh, or the skipper won't let me alongside to-night, and I darn't stow away ashore, or I shall be murdered by them ere Wapping wenches, axing your pardon, marm, for the word, as they knows I belong to the gang."

So anxious, however, was Fitz's mother to hear about the wreck, in hopes it might prevent her son's going to sea, that she not only seemed to have overcome her repugnance to Jim Bell, but even to have entered into the honest roughness of his character, assured him there was a bed at his service, and that the housekeeper would take care the sheets were well aired. At this, Jim laughed most unmercifully.

"Thank you, marm," continued this exquisite friend of her child's finding, "but I always turn in like a trooper's horse, all standing, saving, marm, it might be, my coat, down-treaders (shoes), and flying-jib" (neckcloth). After administering to himself another glass of grog, which contained two parts brandy, he made a kind of bow, and was going away, when, to the extreme delight of Fitz, his mother asked Bell when she should have the pleasure of his company again, and it being fixed for Tuesday, she whispered something to him, to which he replied, "Ay, ay, marm, depend upon it I won't fail!" After which, Fitz saw him to the street-door.

As the rain continued to pour down in torrents, his young host proposed sending for a hackney-coach, which he refused; Fitz then offered him an umbrella.

"A what?" mumbled Jim, by no means pleased; "why, d—— you, d'ye think I'm made of sugar, or salt?" As for you, youngster, if ever you go to sea you'll be a reg'lar *Gentleman Jack*, and mark my words if that ar'n't the name you'll go by;" and bestowing on Fitzjohn another grip from his hand-vice, away he went.

Next morning, before breakfast, Fitz called on Mr. Snip, in College-street, but nothing could induce him to undertake making a pair of trowsers like Jim Bell's. He said that all those things might be bought ready-made at Wapping, and offered to advance Fitz three guineas, if he would

let him set down in his bill a great-coat and another suit of clothes. To this, as an act, on the part of Master Snip, of a not much more cheating character than the usual course of the tribe, Fitz consented, and at once touched the ready.

Instead, therefore, of taking his ride in Rotten Row, off trotted he, with his groom, to the Tower, and giving the horse to the servant to hold, went down the stairs to get a boat that he might procure the assistance of Jim Bell in the intended purchase. Here a new difficulty arose: not a waterman would take him off to the Tender; and the most of them recommended him, if he wanted to reach the Enterprize, to swim on board. This he certainly would have attempted, had he not had on heavy boots and spurs; not having then learnt the accomplishment of putting both his hollow hands together, like a speaking trumpet, and calling out, "Ship, a-hoy."

Turning, in his distress, towards the upper part of the hill, he observed a union jack flying out of a public-house window: on inquiry, he found it was a rendezvous for the press-gang, and having heard a gruff voice sing out, "I say, halloo there! you Gentleman Jack!" he looked again, and, to his great comfort, discovered Jim Bell sitting on a wooden bench smoking a pipe, but so changed in his dress that he hardly knew him.

His trowsers had given way to a pair of corderoy breeches and blue worsted stockings; and his long-quartered pumps and large buckles were replaced by a pair of high shoes, which were laced a few inches above his ankle-bones.

His coatee-jacket, and blue waistcoat, were turned into a farmer's coat with large silvered buttons, and a dirty yellow waistcoat and his black flying-jib into a red spotted neckerchief.

On inquiring the reason of this metamorphosis, he said, "I'm always obliged to hoist false colours, you see, when I go for men in the rookeries, so that we learn where to pin them when they have got their grog aboard."

All hopes of laying out the three guineas that day were at an end, and he promised to fix a time when he came to dinner on the morrow. On our hero's return home, his mother told him Lord H—— S——r, the Admiralty lord to whom she had introduced him, promised to dine with her the next day, and bring with him, if possible, the port-

admiral, Sir P—— P——r, who was coming up from Portsmouth to conduct down Lady P——, then in London. "So that," said her ladyship, "with your friend, Mr. Bell, there will be three naval gentlemen, and something may be decided about you."

About half-past five Jim arrived, and brought with him a roll of drawings containing about twenty of the most horrible shipwrecks and sea disasters that could be found throughout Wapping, and when Fitz's mother entered the room he said, "Look ye here, marm, I have obeyed your orders (this was what they had whispered about on Sunday), and I think a precious dose I have got, for that ere young beggar." At this, her eyes glistened with joy, and on looking them over, they found about the middle of the roll, the battle of the 1st of June, with *Le Vengeur*, French line-of-battle ship, sinking by the head, and close alongside of her the English ship-of-the-line, the *Defiance*; being the vessel my young friend Jack Falcon the middy was on board.

Her ladyship instantly pointed out the *Vengeur* more particularly to her son's notice, as one of our vessels.

"No, no," said Fitz, "it is a French ship, and she had no colours flying when she went down: Jack told me she had surrendered beforehand."

His mother then observed, that it might as well have happened to an English ship, and that he might have been on board, for English ships were sunk, and obliged to surrender, as often as those of the French.

"Belay all that, marm!" said Jim, giving her a look which she did not soon forget. Then, thrusting his hands in his trowsers' pockets, he took two or three trips athwart the drawing-room, squirted some tobacco on the bright bars of the grate, and came to an anchor by the fire-side.

At this instant, they heard a most tremendous knock at the street-door.

"O Mr. Bell!" said his hostess, quickly, "I had forgotten to tell you that I have invited two naval gentlemen to meet you, whom I dare say you know, and I hope that you will all use your endeavours to dissuade my boy from going to sea."

"Why, as for that, marm, I tell you it's no use. The only way is to clap him before the mast for a winter's cruise, and I'll warrant he will soon be mammy-sick; and,

if it should turn up these naval friends of yours are Billy Hawkins and his brother, as is going first and second mates of the *Mary Anne* this voyage, seeing I know no others in this port but what I left aboard the Tender, they'll tell you the same."

"O no, Mr. Bell," said the lady, most innocently ignorant of her guest's position in the service. "You're not going to meet the gentlemen you mention, but a very gallant officer, who's port admiral at Portsmouth, and a very old friend of mine, one of the Lords of the Admiralty."

Who, marm!!!" exclaimed Jim, starting up from his seat in the utmost consternation, at the same time thrusting his thumb into his cheek, pulling out the quid of tobacco, and slipping it into his waistcoat pocket.

Before her ladyship could, however, reply, the conversation was interrupted by the servant throwing open the door, and announcing Lord H—— S——r. His lordship paid his respects, and introduced Sir P—— P——r, while her ladyship, in her turn, introduced Mr. James Bell of the navy, and then Fitzjohn.

The latter having more of the *habitude du monde* than his friend Jim, felt himself of course quite at home, while Jim Bell, on the contrary, as he afterwards confessed, was taken flat aback, and unable to pay off on either tack.

During dinner, on finding himself in the company of men who were the demigods of his profession, of whom he had heard, certainly, and perhaps seen, but never addressed before in his life, Fitzjohn and his mother both strove in vain to get a word out of him, for there he sat, with his eyes as immovably fixed on the two naval magnates as if they had been apparitions.

Fitzjohn asked him several times whether it was low water in his black-bottle, for the servant had been ordered to put brandy by him instead of wine; and he observed that he took a silver drinking-cup instead of a glass, which he whispered to Fitz was, that no one might see the quantity of brandy he put in. "Since," he said, "his tongue had taken leave of absence, and he could not hoist the signal for recall, until he was a little screwed up."

The lord of the admiralty was a remarkably gentleman-like personage; a man of the world, who went to sea when he pleased, and selected such a ship as suited his taste.

The port admiral was a straightforward, plain-spoken sailor, a gentleman also in his manners and in his language; but there was something austere and determined in his countenance and conversation, and he was evidently a little out of his latitude whenever his hostess and Lord H—— S——r happened to touch on any of the charming little scandals of the *beau monde*, in which, as might well be expected, he was not *au courant*.

As soon as the cloth was removed, and the room quiet from trays, glasses, and decanters, Fitz naturally expected that his friends, thus assembled in divan, would have begun talking about his entrance into the service, but his mother would not take the hint, notwithstanding all his nods and winks. At last, addressing Jim, she said,—

“Pray, Mr. Bell, favour us with the account of the shipwreck, which the lateness of the hour prevented your giving me on Sunday evening.”

Jim looked horror-stricken, and gave Fitz such a pinch as nearly made him jump off his seat. At last, after considerable hemming, growing as pale as his complexion permitted, and twice bestowing his tobacco on the carpet, he said,—

“If the admiral will tell you, ma’am, about the battle when he commanded off the Dogger Bank, I’ll overhaul my memory, and tell you about the wreck afterwards.”

“Mr. Bell,” said the admiral, very gravely, “I should judge from what I see that you have been long enough at sea to obey orders, particularly from the ladies.”

“Why your honour must know,” quoth Jim, “that as to the matter of that, I’ve never yet had the advantage of being spliced, and never took orders from them sort of craft.”

Fitz here ventured to tell the admiral, “My mother, Sir P——r, wants Mr. Bell to tell all the worst stories he can think of, to deter me from going to sea, but I’m determined that nothing shall prevent me, and if I cannot go as a middy, I will as a cabin-boy.”

On this, the admiral encouraged him, and explained to her ladyship the mistaken policy of baulking such an inclination, assuring her that he would not only look out for a good ship for her son, but for a man of interest: which was necessary, as that he then would not go too early to the West Indies, or any bad climate.

Meanwhile Jim, now strongly in her ladyship's interest, kept nudging Fitz under the table, so as almost to dislocate his knee, upon which he said, "Now, my dear mother, are you not decided?" and at last she sighed out, "Well, I suppose I must consent." Whereupon Jim gave Fitz a most dreadful thrust in the back, and saying, "Now, you young beggar, you have made a regular mull of it," at once rose and took his leave: after his making a scrape to each of the party. Fitz saw him to the street-door. "Why, you pie-a-wau-wau-picked-up-alongshore-hawbuck," said Jim, "why the devil could not you give a fellow a friendly warning? Do you think that you'd ever have caught me shoving my nose in here if I'd known I was to run foul of that Lord of the Admiralty and that Sir P— P——r? Next time you sarve me such a trick as that, look out for squalls, that's all." Then, after the usual break-finger squeeze, he departed, promising to breakfast with Fitz the next morning, and muttering as he went, "How lucky it is to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth!"

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning brought Jim Bell, punctual to his word, but at seven o'clock, instead of ten, so that by dint of hammering at the door and agitating the bell, he got into the house about eight, to the great annoyance of the lazy servants, and, with a most demolishing noise at the bedroom door of Fitzjohn, roared out, "Out or down, Mr. feather-bed sailor. If you want to go to the slop-shop, you'd better bear a hand, and turn out." On Fitz pulling up the night-bolt, Jim came in, and without further ceremony dragged all the bed-clothes off his protégé, and throwing him, with the end of a stick, his shirt and stockings, he roared out, "Here's your uphaulers and flesh-bag, young lubber."

As Fitz's mother had decided the evening before, that he was to be completely fitted out at Portsmouth, they had now no occasion for their trip to Wapping. Jim therefore amused himself by making a hearty breakfast on cold mutton and bottled porter, and wound it up by finishing

two legs of a grilled turkey, and a strong north-wester, leaving it, as usual, dead low water in the brandy bottle.

When the hostess came down, she confirmed her decision of the preceding evening, provided one other person, whom she had to consult, did not object. She returned to dinner, and was extremely silent, and Fitz afterwards discovered that the person in question had said, "Let him go to the devil his own way!" but the next morning a servant brought two letters of recommendation for him, the one to the worthy port-admiral at Portsmouth, the other to Captain Jack Pleasant, commanding one of the finest two-deckers in the British navy, the *Impetus*.

Fitz's mother proposed going down the *following week* with him to Portsmouth in her travelling chariot, with four post-horses: but as he had heard Jim Bell say it was milksopish to get inside a carriage, he told her he preferred going outside the Portsmouth coach: and, as he was anxious to shake off petticoat government, he recommended that Jim Bell and himself should go first and prepare the togger.

As nothing could induce her to agree to this arrangement, her trustee, or, as Fitzjohn always called him, old Trusty, was obliged to book himself inside the coach, whilst Fitz booked out, and it was with the greatest difficulty he could dissuade his mother from sending down her favourite footman, Joseph, to take charge of him, and indeed to accompany him to sea.

These matters being all settled, and the places booked in the Portsmouth coach for the ensuing day, Lady Fitzjohn sent for her son on the preceding evening to have some private conversation with him.

When our hero entered his mother's boudoir, he immediately perceived that her eyes were red with weeping. Imagining that this could only arise from his persisting in his wish to go to sea, he took the vacant chair to which she pointed, and, moved at the repeated and continued distress, of which he conceived himself to be the cause, mentally resolved to sacrifice his own wishes, rather than become the source of sorrow to one who equally deserved and possessed his love.

While, however, he was turning over in his own mind, how he should give utterance to this determination, his mother said, "I do not know, my dear boy, whether, in the

communication I am about to make to you, I am acting the most prudent part or not. I have considered the question deeply, and if, from my taking my present step, you should, in after-life, be unfortunate enough to find that I have inflicted on you needless anxiety, you must attribute my so doing, not to any want of affection, but to that weaker judgment of our sex, which makes it the more necessary for us to look to yours for kindness and support."

During this address, so different from what he had expected, Fitzjohn sat in the utmost astonishment, which he was about to express, when his mother continued, "Up to this moment, Augustus, you have never heard me mention your father, and even now it is only with the utmost pain and reluctance; but it is possible, that before you return from sea, you may no longer have a mother to watch over you: and I would not that any other lips than my own should be the first to speak to you of a parent of whom you know nothing.

"At fifteen, Augustus, I first met your father, then the eldest son of an Irish gentleman of title, and travelling on the continent with a friend. I had been placed in a convent, not far from Munich, to be educated, by my father, who was a poor proud German baron. What through the negligence and cupidity of those to whose care I was entrusted, my own childish folly and ignorance, and your father's daring, we soon became acquainted, and I used to meet him and his friend every evening in the gardens of the convent.

"Your father was very handsome and very rich, while his friend had nothing but the most gentle and engaging manners to recommend him, and was equally as poor. They had been brother collegians at Oxford, and your father was then paying his travelling expenses on the road, for the sake of his society; which, I must say, was the most fascinating I ever had the happiness to enjoy. Nothing could be more different than the manner of the two gentlemen towards me—your father professing the most unbounded passion and admiration, his companion nothing but the deepest respect. I was not then experienced enough to know which had really won my heart, and which had only dazzled my vanity; but the sequel of my story will prove.

“Evening after evening, during the summer, we used to meet for two hours in the delicious gardens of ** *** ***, accompanied only by an old sister, whom your father had deeply bribed. The tales which he constantly told me of the happiness and magnificence of England, soon captivated my fancy, and when he proposed a secret marriage and elopement, I said little to oppose it.

“At first, I told him that he had only to go to the dilapidated old castle of my father, who would no doubt at once yield his consent, and that then we might be united in the presence of my dear mother, and all our family connexions, according to the custom of my countrymen. This he opposed on the ground that the Lady Abbess of the convent would infallibly be disgraced for not having guarded against my forming the acquaintance, and next, that a stolen marriage would give the finishing stroke of sentiment to our attachment, and be infinitely more delightful.

“Silly child, as I then was, with all a German’s tendency towards the romantic, I no longer hesitated than to gain his solemn promise, that he should write to my parents, as soon as we were safely clear of the convent, informing them of our marriage, his name and condition, and of the intention to present ourselves at the castle for their forgiveness, as soon as our bridal tour should be terminated.

“For the last few nights before this decided step was taken, I confess I saw in the manner of your father’s companion, a degree of reluctance to the accomplishment of this scheme, which found a sympathetic response in my own bosom. But what with the great difficulty of coming to any explanation, the excitement and anxiety of my own breast, the consciousness that I was acting an imprudent, if not an improper part, and the feeling that I had already gone too far to retract, I stifled the warning forebodings of my bosom, and the marriage proceeded.

“The elopement was planned by too able a mind to fail, and, on arriving at a little village, fifteen miles distant from the convent, your father and myself were united in the presence of your father’s companion: horses were already in waiting for the latter, and, while he directed his course toward my father’s neighbourhood, to watch the effect which the news of our elopement would produce, your father and myself were rapidly borne away in his private

carriage with all the speed that could take us in a contrary direction.

“Often when I am alone, I place my hands across my eyes, and fancy I behold your father’s friend as he stood to shake hands, and bid us adieu at the carriage door. He said nothing—his grasp was cold, his features motionless; except that the moonbeam which stole in at the carriage window, showed a slight trembling of his features. The door was shut—I saw his white hand waved in the moonlight, and we had parted! Sinking into the farther corner of the carriage while the tears coursed down my face, I could not help asking myself if this was the happiness for which I had risked so much?

“By degrees my spirits rallied, and at first in the devotion of your father I thought I had gained that, alas! unattainable felicity, which, in truth, can only be said to exist in the imaginations of the young. In a few days, for they flew too quickly for me to note their passage, we arrived at the sea-side, believing, as your father told me, that the crossing of this was but a short part of our intended tour. I, with a boundless confidence, in which it was both my duty and pleasure to indulge, thought only of obeying him, and, in four mornings afterwards, was surprised and dazzled by finding myself in London.

“A week was spent amidst all its then new and enchanting brilliancies, when I suggested that it was time for us to present ourselves before my father, in whose arms I longed once more to find myself. Leaving the English metropolis, as I imagined, for this purpose, your father proposed that we should visit on the way a villa which he had purchased for me.

“It did not take much entreating to gain my consent. In the delicious gardens of Villavigna, the name he had given to this spot in Buckinghamshire, three weeks more glided on, and I reminded him of his promise. To this he pleaded that his father was still living, and still ignorant of his marriage—that if we returned to Germany, my parent would certainly never consent to keep his secret, and, in such case, the old earl, for that was the rank of my new father-in-law, would disinherit his son of a very large estate which was left entirely at his disposal.

“I cannot tell you, my dear boy, how this intelligence

shocked me; for by it I was left to struggle with my affection for my own family, which was great, and that regard which any young girl, possessed of the slightest warmth of heart, must long feel for one who has become her husband.

"Reflection soon told me that I had no alternative, but to comply with the wishes of the latter. I, who in a foreign land, of the language of which I did not know one word,—for your father had carefully guarded against my obtaining the slightest knowledge of it—utterly ignorant of the world, and everything that related to it—I had just sense enough to see it was perfectly impossible for me to help myself, and therefore determined, as the only resource, to make myself as happy in my husband's society as I could.

"Even this consolation was not long permitted to me. I soon discovered, what my sex are too ready in perceiving, yours in displaying, that the lover had become lost in the husband, and that affection had changed to indifference. I now found, with the deepest sorrow, that his personal beauty had been his chief advocate in my bosom, and was the most dearly cherished in his own. This, however, soon ceased to plead for him to me, when I saw, in the daily intercourse of our lives, how solely he relied on its eloquence. Possessed of no deep culture of mind, a spoilt child of fortune, surfeited with the world and those blessings of life which he knew as little how to value as to deserve, all my efforts to divert his *ennui* were in vain, and with the deepest mortification I became conscious in my own heart of a rapidly-increasing feeling of contempt towards him.

"The speedy result of such a state of feeling may be imagined, and a violent altercation ensued. I was told that the most abject compliance with your father's temper and caprices was alone left for me, since my only claim to his indulgence was that of being his *mistress*—not his *wife*!—that the seeming priest by whom we were married had no further claim to that sacred office, than the robes he had sacrilegiously assumed.

"Of all that followed this dreadful announcement, I knew nothing; the next time that consciousness returned to me, I was lying on a bed of the most intense anguish and sickness, surrounded by the cold looks of strange servants, unable to utter even a word in common with myself. Closing

my eyes once more, I offered up to Heaven the prayer of a broken heart, whose only hope was to be relieved of the miserable existence that oppressed it.

"While in this act of devotion, the cry of an infant sounded close to my bed-side; with it came the trembling conviction that I must have prematurely become a mother. Feeble as I was, my attendants understood my signs and brought it to me; and from that moment, my dear boy, we drew the breath of life together."

"By heavens!" exclaimed Fitzjohn, the tears starting into his eyes as he rushed into his mother's arms, "tell me where that unnatural father is to be found, and I——"

He could say no more, his heart was full—and the parent who had suffered so much for his existence, felt there was still something to reward her sorrows, while she could grasp to her bosom so affectionate a son.

Desiring him, after a few minutes, to be more composed, he drew his chair to her side, and, still holding his hand in hers, she went on with her story.

"With the possession of my infant, I soon found a new motive for living, I might almost indeed say another sphere of life, and for many days my thoughts never once reverted either to him who had been to me the cause of so much misery, or to my own family, whom I could not doubt that I had plunged into so much distress. The first was, however, recalled to me by one of the servants putting into my hands a sealed packet, which he had left in their charge, to be delivered as soon as I should be out of danger.

"After some common-place expressions of condolence, the truth of which it was not very likely that I should believe, your father stated that business of great moment called him from me, for at least two months—that every care would be taken of me, and the most minute attention paid to my wishes, but that I was not to pass the bounds of the walls that enclosed the grounds, except in a close carriage, nor attempt to cultivate any acquaintance in the neighbourhood.

"Having given an address to which I might direct any letter, he concluded by expressing his hopes of returning as speedily as possible. With this was enclosed a legal document, which he had endorsed in his own hand-writing, to the purport that it gave me a life interest in two thousand

a-year, so long as I should maintain the strictest secrecy as to the circumstances that first led to our acquaintance. My only reply to this, as soon as I was equal to the task of writing a letter, was to the effect, that my silence was only to be procured by his forbearing ever again to intrude his presence upon me, and that this silence would only be maintained so long as might be demanded by the interests of those most dear to me.

“In this complete solitude, six months passed away; my own health became as much restored as I could ever expect it to be, and, greatly to the surprise of all around, you still lived. By this time, I had acquired some very imperfect notion of the language of the country to which, in such an unhappy hour, I had come, and for the next year my whole time was divided between my studies to perfect myself in this, and to take care of you.

“Three several applications were, at this time, made by your father for my consent to his returning to me; but, firm to my determination, I sent but one answer, that I would never again see him voluntarily, unless he came to do myself and child the tardy justice of acknowledging the validity of our former marriage, and have it solemnised in this country. This he as positively refused to do; and, whether from wounded vanity or other feeling I know not, but he forbore to intrude himself on me, for which I entertained the only grateful feeling his conduct had ever deserved.

“I was now left to consider what must be my plans for the future—and a melancholy consideration it was. Everything seemed to militate against me, for the folly that had tempted me to fling myself into the arms of a foreigner, of whom I knew nothing. Could I have known where to address a letter to my husband’s friend, the witness of all our meetings and our marriage, he might have assisted me, but I knew that your father, soon after the event, had purchased him a captaincy in some cavalry regiment, with which he must even then be serving, in India.

“Taking down the map to see where might be this distant scene of his service, all hope fled from me, when I perceived that he was, as it were, in another, and I might well hope, as I fervently did—a better world. To no one else could I look for succour but to my own family; and,

should they even entertain my letter, how could I, the cause of so much anguish, think of bringing into collision my brother and my husband, since fall who might, the wounding sword must pass through me!

"Nothing remained for me, then, but time and patience, to bear, with all the courage I could summon, those evils which my own imprudence had brought upon me.

"In this quiet manner, my life passed away until you reached your sixth year, when I wrote to your father that I should reside some months out of the season in London, for the greater facility of procuring you such tutors as I might conceive you required. From the long impunity which I had permitted to him, or perhaps from mere indolence, he made no opposition to this proposal on my part, but named, as your trustee, an old friend, to whom I had been introduced, on his first bringing me to London, through whom were to pass the various sums necessary for your education.

"As this was a degree of liberty for which I had not looked, I was proportionably pleased at it; and I could not help wondering at the inconsistencies of men's hearts, which will permit them to bestow the sweetest kindnesses on women with one hand, and at the same moment inflict the greatest injuries with the other. From this period, I have generally spent from four to six months of the year in town, until your advancing age required that you should be put to some public school. Your father fixed on Westminster, and I have since scarcely ever returned to Buckinghamshire, except to take you there during the holidays. I now, however, come to a singular part of my story.

"Three years since I was waiting for my carriage in the round-room at the opera, when, amid the throng of people, some one pressed against my shoulder, and, making me a bow, began to utter some words of apology. In this, however, he suddenly stopped short. I had not seen the face of the speaker, for I was busy looking at the door for my servant, but there was something in the tones of his voice which affected me like the shock of an electric chain. I looked up, and there stood before me——"

"My father?"

"No, his friend! All the sad events of my late life seemed to crowd upon me with a degree of violence, which

rendered that moment almost insupportable. I felt myself fainting rapidly, but, fearful of the scene this might create, I made a desperate effort to recover myself, and, quietly taking his arm, tottered to the staircase, without our having exchanged a single word. As I hoped, the cool air revived me.—‘You are ill, my dear Lady ——,’ said he, addressing me by your father’s name. ‘No,’ replied I, ‘but my carriage must be at hand, and I have much to say to you.’

“At this moment, I saw my servant pressing into the hall, and in another minute we drove off. The distance from this to the opera is short, and no sooner did I find myself in my own room, and beyond the cold prying glance of curiosity, than my self-possession entirely gave way.

“‘Tell me,’ said I, abruptly, ‘how could you allow Lord —— so cruelly to deceive me?’—‘In what manner, my dear Lady ——?’ replied he; ‘explain yourself.’

“‘In our marriage. Has he never written to tell you the manner in which he has cast me off as his wife, and denied the validity of our union?’—‘Never, on my honour!—Three months after I last parted from you both, in Germany, I was appointed to a regiment in India, and the first letter I received from my friend, after my arrival in Calcutta, contained the sad news that he had lost you in giving birth to an infant. This was the cause of my conduct at thus suddenly meeting with one I fancied I had lost as a friend for ever; but now your language leads me to suspect that the rumour in question was not set afloat without reason. I do not seek to intrude on your confidence,—I only entreat you to believe that you have an humble, but devoted friend, in myself, who will serve you at any risk to the last breath.’

“‘I believe it,’ said I, ‘I never could bring myself to think otherwise; and I now therefore implore you to tell me, was it with your knowledge, that a fictitious priest was employed at the marriage in which you gave me to your friend?’

“At this question he sunk back into his chair, and I saw the dark colour in his cheek come and go, and something not unlike a tear betray itself in his eye. Alas! thought I, deceived on all hands, where she most clings for truth and protection, what a fatal gift is beauty to a woman! So

securely had I counted on the fidelity of this man, that the appearance of his falsehood seemed worse to me than all I had gone through before.

“‘Is it possible he can have had recourse to this?’ at length replied my companion, speaking in a low agitated voice, as if to himself.

“‘It is indeed,’ said I, ‘but how could you permit it?’—‘I never did, madam, though such indeed were his directions, but his reasons were sufficiently specious, and his promises of a second marriage in England to all appearances sincere. I thought it better, however, to take the safe course, and guard his honour from his evil passions. The officiating priest *was* duly authorized, and no fictitious personage. Never, indeed, could I have brought myself to trust your happiness on ground less stable—since——’

“‘Since what?’—‘I loved you too deeply, Alicia, myself!’

“Never, my dear boy, I sincerely hope, may you be able in future life to form, from your own experience, any just conception of what were my feelings on hearing this confession! Women are by nature infinitely more quick and acute in all matters that relate to the affections than men possibly can be. It is their world—for which they live—for which they die, and to which all their sufferings and their joys have an equally near relation. Shut out from a more extended sphere of action, their energies are bent on this, and hence the painful quickness with which they can interpret the slightest whispers of the heart.

“That the few words just then uttered by my companion were not the mere empty compliments of idle gallantry, I saw too well; but what was far more important to myself, I felt that this affection existed not on his side, alone. Surely, thought I, there was enough that was bitter in my destiny before, without my having to add to all my other ills the treachery of my own bosom!

“But, though the true state of the case was known to myself, there was no occasion for my being so mad as to reveal it to him; I therefore thanked him in as measured terms as I could for the generosity and honour which had saved me from being the victim of another’s deception, and, taking no notice of his alleged reason for the act, I assigned the illness which I really felt as the cause of my retiring.

"The next day he dined with me, and with a judgment, calmed by reflection, we discussed the steps most advisable to be taken. Your father was at this time most fortunately residing on his estates in Ireland. The angry feelings, therefore, of his former friend had no opportunity of finding that hostile vent that might otherwise have terminated the affair; and at length I decided that till your attaining your majority, I would not attempt to claim for you those rights to which you are entitled. My reasons for this were various.

"I was now so strongly drilled into resignation by sorrow and misfortune, that I could conceive no accession of rank or fortune which would have added to my happiness. On the contrary, by establishing the legality of my marriage, I should in all probability have been forced to live with a man for whom I had ceased to feel the slightest portion of esteem, and whom therefore to regard was out of the question. While, on the other hand, even if this were spared me, it would indeed have been but a wretched consolation to have taken my just position in this world, if such a poor accession of rank were to be the means, as it infallibly would have been, of taking from me my child, for whom alone I had struggled through the load of anguish that God had awarded as my burden.

"To the justice of this reasoning, your father's friend seemed, though somewhat reluctantly, to assent; and as when I met him at the opera he had been staying in England for a considerable period, on a renewed furlough from India, which had only a few weeks to expire, I perceived, with mingled congratulation and regret, that this, to me, by far the most formidable subject of apprehension, would soon be removed beyond all possibility of danger to either of us. In order, therefore, to dispose of the time that still remained before his sailing for Bengal, as well as to relieve an anxiety that had long weighed deeply on my heart, I persuaded him to do me the kindness of going over to Germany, and there by means of the unbounded hospitality so common in my native country, introduce himself, as if by accident, into my father's family. If he found that the uncertainty of my fate was still a matter of sorrow with them, he was at liberty to say, that I was now in health and prosperity, but under circumstances so pecu-

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liar that he could state no more. If he found that time had taken the sting from the past, he was to avoid anything that might tend to recall their attention to this point.

"Faithful to the charge, he in due time returned to tell me, as I had hoped, that the latter supposition was the right one; and to this he added the welcome intelligence that they were all living, with the exception of one brother, well and happy to every appearance.

"Within a few days of this, his ship was in the Downs. Everything belonging to him was on board; nor was it till he came to take leave of me, on the morning of his departure, that he was at all aware how much he had disturbed the peace of one to whom he had indeed proved a brother. From a long acquaintance with his character, I was, however, convinced that the moment which divulged my attachment to him, would also annihilate my hopes of getting him back to India; and foreseeing, at a glance, all that threatened to result from this, I determined to take a secure step, that should put the matter beyond debate.

"The evening before the day on which he was to pay his adieus, I ordered my carriage, and without saying where I was going, any further than that I was about to stay for a night or two with a friend, I ordered the carriage for Park-lane, thence drove off for Hyde Park Corner, and there gave my servants further directions to proceed the first stage into Buckinghamshire.

"Previously to this I had left with my favourite servant a note, which, on our friend's being shown into the drawing-room, she delivered to him. In it I had simply stated, that I conceived myself already to have suffered sorrow sufficient in life without voluntarily exposing myself to saying farewell to the most valued friend that an unprosperous life had left to me. I then begged him on no account to delay his setting out for Deal; and, in case of his proving obedient, I promised to become a very faithful correspondent, and further gave him permission to take, as a memorial of our friendship, anything that he might choose to select in my house, be it what it might.

"Poor Annette, who gave him the note, did not fail afterwards to relate to me the manner in which it was received. She described him as alternately pacing the

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room, and flinging himself on the sofa, during the hour which he remained, and vainly endeavouring, by his cross-questions, to find out where I had gone, from one who was as ignorant of the fact as himself: and well indeed that it was so, since Annette confessed to me that her honesty would have been most severely tried, by a note for fifty pounds, which he insisted on her taking.

"After the lapse of an hour, he sat down and wrote me a letter; then, taking up a little spaniel that had been sent me the year before from Blenheim, and a light shawl, that in my hurry I had left the preceding evening on the sofa, he wrapped the latter round his person, and, taking in his arms the little creature that was whining at the absence of its mistress, he descended to the post-chaise that waited to take him to Deal: from whence, by that hour on the ensuing day, he was under weigh for India. Since then, though we have corresponded constantly, we have, of course, never met, and he is now, I hope, more happily taken up by a high command, which has been most deservedly won."

The strength of mind which had hitherto supported Lady Alicia in this narrative of her early trials, here momentarily gave way, and, flinging her arms round her son, she indulged in a flood of tears.

"In a few hours, my dear Augustus, I shall have to part with you also, and then I shall in truth be alone. It is hard indeed, Heaven knows, thus to be compelled to separate from all those we love: and nothing but the conviction that it is for your welfare, could ever support me through it."

For the first time in his life, poor Fitzjohn then felt the fullness of his affection for the fond and still beautiful creature who hung round him.

"My dearest mother," said he, endeavouring to dry alternately, first her tears and then his own, "if I had known all this, I never would have thought of going to sea, and even now you have only to speak the word, and nothing shall make me leave you."—"No, Augustus," said she, "it must not be so; the hour for parting must sooner or later arrive, if not for sea, still for college. The profession in which you are going to embark is the best school, after all, for teaching you to conquer those difficulties which we must every one of us encounter at some period of life. You are about to enter it under the highest auspices. All

that I ask of you, is to preserve, as long as I shall see necessary, the strictest secrecy on all I have told you. Do not forget how much I have borne for your sake, and how dearly I love you, and while you never relax in your efforts to distinguish yourself, live on with me in the hope that brighter days will be permitted to arrive for us."

Fitzjohn having, in reply to this, given his mother a solemn promise most sacredly to adhere to the minutest direction which she was so well qualified to give, they soon parted for the night, each to prepare for that more decided separation which the ensuing morning was to bring.

CHAPTER IV

It was on a cold, sleety evening in January, 1797, that the London coach pulled up in Portsmouth, at the Blue Post-eses, where the midshipmen leave their chesteses, deskeses, &c. On the top of the coach, to prevent any possibility of being called a milksop, sat Fitzjohn; but, as the vehicle had come down nearly head to wind, he did not feel quite sure whether he had any toes, fingers, or nose, or, in another expressive phrase, whether he was not all thumbs: and it was with great difficulty he could get down. The pleasure of paying and seeing the luggage out, he left to old Trusty; for what the deuce is the use of a trusty, if he can't do this?

Fitz had not been seated ten minutes by the coffee-room fire, when he heard three cheers in the next apartment, from a party of about twenty; and, after a short silence, one of the party got up, saying, "My lads, I propose a toast, 'A merry damnation to all nip-cheeses, and may they soon be choked by their own bread-dust.'"

"Holloa!" thought Fitz, "these must be chaps of my kidney;" but old Trusty coming in, informed him that he had ordered their luggage to be put into a wheelbarrow, and taken up to the George, as the Blue Posteses Inn was not sufficiently respectable for them; Fitz, on the contrary, was quite delighted, not only with the inn, but also with the party: and had intended to have asked permission to have joined them; for the waiter told him they were a set of jolly reefers, who had been dining together. This point

was, however, soon decided ; for no sooner did the waiter twig old Trusty's three-cornered cocked-hat, all the cocks so equidistant that it was impossible to distinguish either its sternpost or cutwater, and which the wearer, who had served under Wolfe, used to call the Cumberland cock, than he came up to Fitzjohn with the napkin under his arm, and inquired if that was an admiral ; "because," said the waiter, "*we* never allows them sort of people to come here, for one set of reefers does the house more good, waiters and chambermaids too, than a whole court-martial of they nob's."

Finding that such a mutual antipathy existed, Fitz was obliged to give in, and, on arriving at the George, perceived a very great difference in the cold, quiet, large-roomed hotel, with its various accompaniments of solemn silence, waiters in silk stockings, and wax-lights.

When supper had been ordered, and Fitz became a little warm, he asked old Trusty as to the plans of the next day, in pursuance of which he rose very early, and put on his best clothes to wait on the commander-in-chief.

One thing alone puzzled him : he had not as yet acquired the accomplishment of chewing tobacco, but, as a make-shift, his mother's coachman had taught him to smoke a pipe ; so as he thought it would be more sailor-like to smell a little of the Indian weed, he went below, and took a cruise in the inn-yard, with a pipe in his cheek, before breakfast.

As Fitzjohn sat down to breakfast after this delicate proceeding, old Trusty observed to him, "How all these sea-ports stink of tobacco and every other nastiness !" Notwithstanding this remark, he escaped detection, and got through breakfast tolerably quick, after which the old boy went up-stairs to get the letter of introduction.

In a few minutes he returned, dressed in a crimson velvet waistcoat, the pockets of which projected like an editor's box, and were edged with tarnished gold-lace ; and a pair of high hessian boots, which came above the knee, and were kept up behind by a strap and buckle, big enough for the girth of a horse,—the same, in all likelihood, that he wore at the battle of Quebec.

On arriving at the port-admiral's house, which was nearly opposite, and being told that the admiral could not be seen

until one o'clock, they walked down the town towards the ramparts, and the sentinels, on passing, seemed quite undecided whether they ought, or ought not, to salute that same mysterious three-cornered hat, whose air *militaire* had already created such surmises at the Blue Posteses. On Fitz proposing to call at the same, Trusty laid his injunction on him, not even to mention he had been there, telling him always to frequent the best hotels, as it mattered little what a gentleman ate,—it was the place and society in which the proceeding took place which marked the man.

The town was, of course, full of naval officers of all ranks: the middies bore the happiest countenances—and as our two friends passed along they heard one of these young dogs say to another, “Look ye, there’s a queer old governor!—what d’ye call that truck he has got on?—I dare say he’s some relation to old Benbow, or maybe he’s just been fished up from the Royal George.”

“No, no, Bill,” responded the other, “don’t you know what that is? Why that’s the new uniform just come out for the bishop of marines.”

This being purposely said so loud, that old Trusty could not help hearing it, he turned round in great warmth, and shook his cane at the offenders, for which he got such a cheer as made him heartily glad to reach the ramparts.

On mounting these, a seventy-four was being towed out of harbour by about fifty boats, so that she passed very close under the battery. The cheering of the boats’ crews, the boatswain’s whistle, the immense guns by the side of which Fitz was standing, and the total novelty of the sight, as the ship passed down with the current, produced on him a sensation of enthusiasm and joy never to be forgotten.

Seeing an old blow-hard looking fellow that stood by, he asked whether that was a frigate, and what was her name.

“Why, young chap, did you ever know a frigate to carry two rows of teeth? No, no, sir, she’s no frigate. Her name is the Blind Russell.”

“Devilish odd!” thought Fitz, “that a man-of-war should have teeth and eyes, or else how could she be blind? What would I not give to have Jim Bell here as an interpreter! Pray tell me, old boy,” said he, “how can a ship be blind?”—and at the same time slipping half-a-crown into his hand.

"Why, sir, for the matter of that," replied the seaman, "nobody can tell you better than I can, for I was on board her at the time; and the way it fell out was this:—Just at dusk one evening, we saw a strange sail right ahead; and after we had cleared for action—for you should be always ready before you comes to close quarters, you know—we claps all sail on, as much as the old craft could stagger under, till I take my davy if we didn't expect some of the masteses to go by the board every minute. Well, you see, sir, by-and-by it came on werry hazy, and we lost sight of the sail all at once."

"I suppose," said Fitz, "it was a Frenchman."—"To be sure it was," replied the old tar, "or he would not have run away; but, in about half an hour, our first leaftenant, who, although he had lost an eye, had another devilish sharp one left, saw the sail hull up, and we trims, claps on more sail, and chased all night, but the devil an inch did we gain on him; though, to be sure, we managed to hold our own, so that if we gained none he didn't."—"Why didn't you fire at him?" interrupted old Trusty. "Ah well!" replied old Blowhard, grinning at him, "now I knows you be no sailor, man, by that ere question. I've been trying to make you out by the cut of your jib for the last half hour, but couldn't;—fire at him!—fire at Tom the Devil, I was going to say; we don't throw away our hammunion that way, I promise you, particularly in the Blind Russell:—why, don't you know it was the Russell that sunk *Lee Wenjure*, in the first of June, under the old Black Jack?* You sogers shut your eyes and fire away, hennemy or no hennemy, as I used at sparrows in the hedge."

On hearing this account of military valour, old Trusty seemed mightily inclined to give Blowhard a topper on the head with his cane.

"I means no offence to nobody whatsomdever," said the latter, quickly perceiving the effect of his strictures:—"fire at him, indeed! Why, man alive, she was always two leagues

* Such was the name by which they called Lord Howe. Master Blowhard must, however, have made some sad mistake, in his fond affection for the glory of the Blind Russell and himself, since, if my memory serves me right, naval historians give the credit of destroying the *Vengeur* to the Brunswick, whose noble-hearted and gallant captain, Hervey, died of his wounds before the action closed.

ahead, and in the Russell we never fires until we sees the whites of their eyes;—but lor,” muttering to himself, “there’s no argufying with them ’ere sogers, whatsomever.”

“Well, well,” said Fitz, “what becamed of the French ship you were chasing?”—“Why, sir,”—and here old Blowhard scratched his head, as if not a little ashamed,—“that’s just the joke against us; for, though I’d swear in my own mind that the craft must have capsized in a squall, still, when daybreak came, we could see nothing but the spritsail clewline block, which, you know, hangs just outside the bob-stays,—and so the whole channel fleet will swear to ye that we had been chasing the block all night, and nothing more; and so after that, they named us the Blind Russell ever since; but some of our officers swore they saw lights in his starn gallery, and I believe it.”

Old Trusty, who had been eyeing his watch several times, now observed it wanted but a few minutes of one; and, as he was one of the most punctual men alive, Fitz asked old Blowhard the way to the port-admiral’s.

“I’ll show your honours,” said he, “there or anywhere else; but you must not keep me after four o’clock; I shan’t be fit for much in the dog-watch else,”—looking all the while at the half-crown,—“I can’t keep money, it melts very soon, and runs away in grog.”

“I dare say,” quoth Trusty, rather sneeringly.

“Then there, ould governor, you’re wrong; it isn’t all of it goes that way: I gives Peg a shilling a day, and that keeps us both, saving in licker.”

When our pair arrived at the admiral’s, the first person they saw was an elderly gentleman, with a two-foot telescope and white lappels. He desired them to sit down in the waiting-room, and asked Trusty his name and business.

Having told his name, the old boy said the letter he brought would explain the object of his visit. The lieutenant wanted to take the letter to the secretary, but Trusty would not give it up. The secretary himself next made his appearance, to say that all letters relating to the service first came to him.

Old Trusty, upright as a bolt, assured the man in office that, although it did in some measure relate to the service,

still it was of a private nature, in confirmation of which he showed him the word "private" on the outside.

The secretary, on looking at the immense seal, became quite an altered man: and, after giving Trusty a bow to the very ground, begged to express the pleasure that the admiral would have in receiving him *immediately*. With this, they were at once ushered into the house, and Fitz instantly recognised the worthy admiral who had dined at his mother's with Lord H—— S——r.

He received his visitors most cordially, and requested them to take up their abode at the Admiralty-house. This old Trusty seemed very much inclined to do, but by jogs and signs from Fitzjohn, he at length declined. The admiral then told him that there would always be two places reserved for them at the dinner-table; and began to talk about looking out for some ship for Fitz.

Hereupon, Trusty informed him that the same personage who had given Fitzjohn a letter to himself, had also given him a letter to Captain Jack Pleasant, whose ship he understood was lying at St. Helens.

"The ship," said the admiral, "is at St. Helens, but the captain is now in my drawing-room with Lady P——r, and I will request him to come down that I may introduce you and your young friend to him. He is the man of all others that I should have selected for my dearest friend to begin his profession with."

On the servant's entering, he said, "Request Captain Pleasant to have the kindness to see me before he leaves the house—he is in the drawing-room."

It is impossible to describe the great anxiety Fitzjohn felt to behold the man with whom he was to begin his new life; he expected every instant to see a second Hercules, with a sword fit to embowel the Nemean lion, and all the *et cetera* with which Shakspeare describes, "a fierce and boisterous captain of the sea." Great, indeed, therefore, was his astonishment to see, when the door opened, a little pallid, weak-looking gentleman enter, wrapped up in a fur-lined blue coat, the fur up to his ears, and the coat fastened with frogs before; and, instead of a seven-foot sword, a small genteel but useful cane in his hand.

"Captain Pleasant," said the admiral, "I introduce to you, Mr. Fitzjohn and Captain ——, his guardian; they have a letter for you from the ——"

I soon perceived that my new captain was a most finished gentleman and a well-educated man, but appeared to me more fit for a drawing-room than a quarter-deck.

After he had read the letter of introduction with his eye-glass, which he did by putting the tip of his right-hand little finger in the starboard corner of his mouth, he took a regular survey of our hero's person.

"Rather late in life to begin the sea, young man," said he.

"So his friends think," replied old Trusty, for which Fitz could most willingly have crammed the admiral's gold-laced cocked-hat down his throat; he therefore added, "I am younger than I look, sir, as I am reckoned tall of my age."

"I have no vacancy, admiral," said Pleasant, "what am I to do?"—"Discharge some one into the flag-ship," replied Sir P——r, "we must not disappoint his friends."

"Very well, then, come along with me," said Jack to Fitz, "we will talk about it as we go down to the boat," and taking his arm as soon as they were out of the Admiralty-house, he began in his laconic way, for he was a man of few words, to inquire whether Fitz had got any clothes made, as the ship would be sailing in a few days on a long cruise."

Here old Trusty, to his ward's great anger and dismay, inquired whether, as his ship was full, and the season so bad (January), it would not be better to defer Fitzjohn's *débüt* until summer.

"No, no," said Jack, "if his mother wants to sicken him of his new profession, let him begin in the winter; that's the best time to make him mammy-sick."

Going down High-street, Jack stopped short, and taking out his eye-glass, looked about as if for a particular shop on the opposite side. Crossing over, they all three walked into Mr. Hammond's, whose sign denoted that he was a mercer, by whom young gentlemen were fitted out with the greatest expedition.

Jack having introduced them to the smooth-faced draper, and having told him to give me a proper fit-out, he began taking a list of what was necessary, old Trusty now and then saying, "The less the better, Mr. Hammond, as it is not likely he will remain . . ."

"That shows how much you know about it," mumbled Fitz.

The list being finished and approved, Jack Pleasant gave our hero a friendly shake of the hand, and desired to meet him at the admiral's office next morning at eleven. Meanwhile, Fitz spurred on Hammond to work quickly; and as old Trusty went out first, took an opportunity of whispering in the ear of Snip, ever open to suggestions of cabage, "If one suit of uniform is ready by to-morrow morning, you may charge an extra suit in the bill, for your despatch."

"Sir, you may rely on my pleasing such a gentleman," was Snip's reply, bowing to the very ground, and giving no bad idea of a tailor's notions of gentility.

When Fitz had got a little way up the street, it occurred to him that he might have a coat at least ready-made which would fit, or perhaps a suit of rigging, similar to those Jim Bell was to have accompanied him to purchase at Wapping; so back he ran like a deer, and found in the shop two naval officers, the one with a white patch on each side of his collar, the other with a white edging round his coat and cuffs.

"Mr. Hammond," said Fitz, "have you no ready-made uniforms that would fit me?"

"I am afraid not, sir; there is a coat, but it must be too short in the skirt and arms, but you shall see it."

Out came the coat, and with the greatest difficulty Fitz squeezed into it, the cuffs coming up half-way between the wrist and the elbow-joint.

The white-patch gentleman told him it did not half cover his rudder case; and, as he had said he was so pressed for it, because he was going to dine at the admiral's, the big white-edged man said, "You must not show yourself to the admiral's lady that way, whether or no, Tom Collins."

"Why," said Hammond, "I believe you belong to the same ship this young gentleman is going to join; is it not Jack Pleasant's ship you're aboard?"—"Oh yes," replied they.

"D——n ye, Joe Brown," said the young midddy, "I took him for a post midshipman, he's so taut."—"So did I," replied the other; "and, since you belong to our ship,

youngster, you shall have my coat, if it will fit, and we'll paste on a piece of paper for a weekly account."

But here Hammond undertook to have them duly sewn on in time; and Fitz requested his newly-found shipmates to accompany him to the Crown, and in the street they met old Trusty, to whom his ward began to introduce them, saying, "Guardian, Mr. Joseph Browne."

"Vast heaving there," interrupted the mid, "I want no handle to my name; plain Joe Browne's good enough for me; and this is my messmate, Tom Wilson; and as for you, old cock," slapping Trusty on the back, "I'm d—— glad to see you, and I vote we all go and have a good blow-out at the Blue Posts, as soon as you come from the admiral's."

"I thank you, most exceedingly, Mr. Midshipman," replied Trusty; "one of my age, station, and habits, must decline going into such questionable amusement."

As Fitz's guardian said this in his stiffest manner, he withdrew into the hotel, leaving the youngsters outside, who very quickly voted him an old bore, and having advised our hero to give him the slip as soon as possible, they went off on their own matters.

In due time, Joe Browne's coat was sent up to the George, but, on a careful examination by old Trusty, it was at once rejected, as, besides some large spots of tar, and patched elbows, the underpart of the fore-arms evidently showed it had been somewhat too often used to rub the mess-table, for they both shone like a piece of tarpauline.

CHAPTER V

At the appointed hour, and before the sound was out of the church-bell, Fitz and his trustee reached the admiral's house, and went through the usual ceremony of introduction to my lady and her female companion. It being one of the admiral's public days, generally known by the name of the king's dinner, only two ladies were at the table. Lady P——r received our hero very courteously; and, after asking him a thousand questions about the chit-chat of society in London, which he did not understand, and consequently could not answer, she said, "Is it not rather late in life to enter the navy?" and began talking so much in

that strain, that he really thought his mother had written to and retained her as another pleader in her cause. To ascertain this point, he therefore asked whether she had lately heard from her, and was glad to be told that they were not acquainted or even known to each other. This, to Fitzjohn most disagreeable conversation, was interrupted by the continued *entrée* of personages in blue uniforms, coats, swords, and worked vellum gold button-holes, the uniforms of post-captains in those days: amongst others he recognised Jack Pleasant, his captain, but so altered in appearance by changing the dress which he wore in the cold north-easter of the morning, that Fitz scarcely knew him.

"Captain Pleasant," said Lady P——r, "I did not receive any answer from you; the admiral was not sure whether we should have the pleasure of your company."

"Silence always means consent, madam," said Jack; "and when I heard your ladyship was to be at table, there could be no doubt of my pleasure in accepting it."

From this, before many minutes elapsed, Fitz perceived that Jack was looked up to, not only by the worthy admiral and his lady, but by all the other officers present, among whom were twelve or thirteen post-captains.

Dinner being announced, Jack led my lady down, and observing that Fitz kept hanging astern, he said, "Come, young gentleman, as you and I are to be shipmates, the sooner we become acquainted the better. With Lady P——r's permission, you shall sit by my side," to which she assented.

The flag-captain sat at the head of the table, the secretary at the bottom, the commander-in-chief in the middle, on one side, and my lady opposite; while, on her right hand, sat Jack Pleasant and Fitzjohn. On looking round he could observe there was but one gentleman with the white patch on his collar who was admitted to a similar honour of being present, and who, he subsequently found, was the admiral's grandson, afterwards the young gallant Captain Sir P——r P——r, who fell mortally wounded in a night skirmish with the Americans, and on whose death his relation, Byron, has written the beautiful lines beginning—

"There is a tear for all who die."

The only other junior officer was the lieutenant whom Fitz-

john had seen in the morning with the spying-glass in his hand.

The rest of the table was filled with captains and old Trusty, while directly opposite to Jack Pleasant was an Irish captain, whom he called *Tom Paddy*, and whom Fitz had more particularly remarked when he entered the drawing-room, as having his white silk stockings hanging loose, and not over-clean, and one of his shoe-buckles with what Jim would have called a "slew to port."

Altogether, there appeared about this officer an air of slovenliness and good-nature, that at once made him liked and quizzed, but Fitz soon discovered that he voted old Trusty, his next neighbour, a most confounded bore, for which, in return, Fitz voted him a most excellent good fellow. The first person whom the admiral honoured by drinking wine with, was Fitzjohn, who, from his urbanity and kindness, naturally formed a most favourable opinion of him: almost all the captains followed his example, and last of all Captain Tom, from over the way; saying,—“Mister, I don’t know your name, shall I take wine with you?”

“Why, Tom,” said Jack Pleasant, “don’t you know, this is Mister Newcome?”

“Then,” says Tom, “he must be Johnny Newcome, for, by Jasus, he’s no Paddy! Now, Mr. Johnny Newcome, will ye take wine with me?” Fitz was going to correct him as to his name, but did not, and contented himself with saying in reply, “If you please, Paddy Whack, I will.”

“By Jasus, he’ll do, Jack!” said Tom. Jack looked at the admiral and smiled, but old Trusty gave his ward what was intended for a most petrifying frown, but as Fitz had about seven or eight glasses of wine on board of him, he seemed not to care a straw for anything.

The dinner tables of most commanders-in-chief are but stiff, dull affairs, but this seemed to go off very agreeably, and some time afterwards, as Captain Tom Paddy was telling a pleasant story, he made several mistakes, at which Jack Pleasant said, “What do you call that Tom, in your country?”—“They call it a bull, Jack,” replied Tom, “and I’ve been doing nothing all the morning but making bulls.”

“Indeed! then why don’t you get the contract for beef?” said Jack.

At this, a general and loud laugh induced my Lady P——r to rise from the table.

About nine o'clock they were all dispersed, the admiral telling old Trusty that he had ordered his barge the next morning to row him and his charge round the fleet, and take luncheon on board his flag-ship.

As Tom and Jack, or, as they were sometimes called from their great intimacy, Jack and Jill, went out together, Fitz kept close on board his captain, helping him on with his fur coat and various other wrappings.

"Are you going to St. Helens to-night, Jack?" said Tom.

Anxiously did Fitz hope that Jack would have said yes; as he had determined to have gone with him, but his answer was, "Not quite mad yet, Tom." On which Tom took his leave.

Fitz walked with his captain, who had taken his arm, down to his lodgings, and would fain have gone in with him, and spent the evening, talking over his future profession. This Jack did not encourage, but recommended him to get on board next day if his uniforms were complete, as the clerk of the cheque would be on board to muster, and if he was present, his services would begin from that day. Nothing more was now wanting to stir our hero on; he immediately went to Hammond's, who faithfully promised him the undress suit by ten the next morning.

Finding himself, to his great joy, free from old Trusty, he then lounged towards the Blue Posts, in hopes of finding Joe Browne and Tom Wilson. Not a person, however, was to be seen but the waiter, who very gravely told him he would find all the middies of the fleet that were on shore congregated at the Welsh Ambassador's, next door to the theatre.

Pursuing this direction, Fitz had no difficulty in finding the theatre, and seeing a number of middies standing at the door of a public-house adjoining, he, very innocently, asked them if they could inform him where to find the Welsh Ambassador's.

"O! it's the Goat he wants" (the name of the tavern), cried a number at the same time, and in they shoved him, amongst fifty or sixty half-drunken, but merry midshipmen, with their gallery goddesses, seated upon a form, around

a large oval room, the middies supplying these fair deities with hot grog.

Fitz soon espied his friend, Joe, in his great coat only, the waiter at the Crown having neglected carrying his uniform to him, which he had directed him to do when he decided upon not wearing it. Joe received him with his usual frankness, and soon quieted some unpleasant remarks which had been made by many of the others, who wanted to know who that long-shore fellow was. He also introduced him to some of his fairer friends, who hinted to him, that it was necessary to pay his footing, by ordering a bowl of punch. Joe asked him if he had a shot in the locker; but being ashamed of his appearing ignorant in pleasant company, and not having his friend Jim as his interpreter, he boldly said, "Yes, two or three."

Joe immediately roared out, "I say, you waiter, three guineas' worth of punch to Mr. Newcome's christening."

"And a bucket of tar, and a broom to take his portrait," kindly added some other reefer; but this academical honour he begged to decline.

The punch and the cheering, together with the admiral's wine, soon mounted into our hero's head, so that what became of the rest of the night he hardly knew. He awoke in the morning with tremendous thirst, and found himself in strange company, being neither under the roof of the George nor the Blue Posts, though he quickly managed to reach the former, and found at the breakfast-table old Trusty, who had kept the boots and ostler all night searching for him, and who had actually come to the Ambassador's door, but were afraid to enter. Fitz had got Joe Browne to accompany him to the Crown, that he might face his trustee with more courage than by himself. As he expected, the old gentleman no sooner began to growl at Fitz's absence, than Joe said, "I'll tell ye what, old governor, you've seen this youngster fairly under his skipper's orders, and so you've done your duty. But you musn't go to think that reefers won't be reefers, and have a row and a spree occasionally, so if you haven't pluck to enter into them things with spirit, you'd better shove off your boat, and not be lying on your oars here to make one of Joe Bowers's boys no better than a mere spooney, afraid to take a glass of grog or chuck a wench under the chin.

He'll never be a sailor at that rate." To this exordium, old Trusty replied only by a look of the most withering contempt, and speaking in French to his ward, he said, "Pretty society, sir, you have got into." He then rose and left the table, for which neither of our minds was sorry.

At eleven o'clock Fitz and his trustee went to the admiral's office, and the flag-lieutenant accompanied them in the barge as they were rowed about the fleet: about three, they arrived alongside the Billy, eighty-four gun ship, which bore the admiral's flag, and had an excellent lunch, and hearty reception, and lounged in the captain's cabin, in which was a good fire, plenty of sofas, and a large assortment of well-bound books. The two were then shown all over the ship, where the elder being taken for a general officer, the youngsters did not fail to cut their jokes upon his pigtail and Cumberland cock, so that Fitz sincerely wished with Joe Brown, that he would shove his boat off; and, if the truth had been known, he himself began to be of the same inclination.

In the course of six days, all our youngster's rigging was complete; Joe and Tom had been deputed to see that everything was ordered that he could possibly require, and they were not sparing. As they had not yet been aboard Fitz-john's own ship, and as his Fadledeen the second thought it absolutely necessary to report to his mother what sort of a box it was, Jack Pleasant very kindly took them with him on the Sunday, when he made a point of going on board to muster the crew, and dine with his officers.

They all reached the ship about eleven, and every man and officer seemed truly happy to receive so excellent a chief. The latter immediately introduced Fitz to the first lieutenant, and to a senior mid; but his surprise was scarcely less than his delight, on finding in the latter his old Tower friend Jim Bell.

"Holloa, old Gentleman Jack! how the devil did you come here?" bellowed Jim, giving him a most hearty welcome and reception.

It appears that Jim had come down with a draft of men from the Tower, and had been made mate of the hold, as a sure step to promotion.

The officers invited Fitz and Trusty to dine in the ward-

room with the captain, which they did at three p.m., and left the ship at six, so that they got on shore about nine o'clock. The next morning, Fitz was invited to breakfast with the captain at his lodgings. He was there in good time, and was received very kindly. Jack first began the conversation by inquiring what induced our hero to go to sea at that time of life, and then gave him much good advice, and wound up by telling him that, though he could not do any injustice to his followers, he had arranged with one of the middies that he should be rated in his place, as it was of consequence that he should get through his midshipman's time; but that as the difference of pay was of equal consequence to this mid, he should let him receive the difference between the pay of the rating he was obliged to take as A.B., or able-bodied seaman, and that of midshipman; to which Fitz, of course, consented, glad to be taken on board on any terms. Jack then added that, as he was deficient in the coarser duties of a seaman's life and avocations, he must be content, for the present, to mess in the fore-cockpit with the boatswain, whom he designated as "a worthy good man and a very superior seaman," and that they would sail on the Wednesday following; Mr. Browne would see all his traps taken on board, and that he should accompany him in the barge, on the day of their departure.

Joe Browne accordingly very kindly took all our youngster's things off in the launch, on Tuesday evening, together with a large hamper, which his mother had sent down by the waggon, and which had arrived in the nick of time. Old Trusty went round and paid all the bills, having given his ward a good and complete fit-out. And, at length, on Wednesday, the 23rd day of January, 1797, about eleven a.m., Jack Pleasant and his new youngster stepped into the barge at Sallyport; and at half-past one arrived alongside of H. M. Ship Impetus, at St. Helens.

The ship was lying at single anchor, ready for sea, so that in little more than an hour they were fairly under all sail, with light winds, going to join the fleet off Brest. The captain had invited Fitz to dinner before they got out of the boat; and Joe took him down into the cockpit. As this was a crack ship, it was the first and only one that had canvas screens for the midshipmen, a privilege till then

reserved to the mess of the doctor's mates: they were hung around their chests, which were used for seats, while the tables stood in the middle.

Joe, however, soon informed Fitz that he was to mess in the fore-cockpit, where he might expect to remain until he at least knew how to use a marlin-spike, and a fid of grease. After the captain's dinner was over, Joe recommended our hero to turn in; but he was so delighted with the novelty of the scene around him, that he preferred staying on deck all night, and was not a little vexed that he had not been ordered to keep watch.

Towards the morning, however, our indefatigable officer grew cold and drowsy, and got down into the fore-cockpit, where he fell fast asleep, with his head on a water-breaker, until about six, when the boatswain coming in, asked him whether he had been caulking it, and what made him lie down like a trooper's horse? Having got him thoroughly awake, Mr. Pipes, so was the boatswain called, proceeded to question Fitz as to his coming to sea. "They tell me," said Pipes, "you young lubberly long-splice, that you've come to sea without your parent's consent: is that true?"—"Not exactly," replied Fitz; "it was only wished that I should stay at home."

"Ay, ay," quoth Pipes, "I knew as much; I suppose they think there is not such another selvigee bago' bones scarecrow to be found again in a hurry; and they're right: hang me if ever I saw sich a snake upon two legs afore! And you must have a precious sight of brass, too, young chap, to think such a thing as you would ever make a sailor. Speak the truth now, you lying young war-mint, if you have any murrality in ye. A'nt you afraid that the first storm we meet with, will settle your hash for leaving your friends agin their inclaynation?"—"No," replied Fitz, "I should never think of such a thing."

"Then the more shame for you. I begins to suspect that you're one of your reg'lar young rip-me-bates (reprobates), that'll oblige me to wear out on your hide a fathom or more of good king's rope, before I bring you to any sense of vartue and property—a reg'lar tough-skinned, hard-hearted, young eeligator. Tell me now, reefer, didn't your mammy *cry* when you left home?"—"Perhaps she did a little."

"Poor old soul! And that ere rum file in the three-cornered tile, didn't he pipe his eye a little at starting?"—"A drop, perhaps, he might."

"Poor old beggar! 'Tis an ungrateful trade the hatching of young uns: a man might nigh almost as well sit upon *wipers*, for——"

What further might have come forth in Mr. Pipes's tender-hearted soliloquy, Fitz never knew, for the word being passed for the whistling functionary on the deck above, he started up the ladder, and was out of sight in an instant.

Some one coming by soon after the boatswain's departure, Fitz asked where he could get some water to wash himself; the answer to which was, "there was plenty alongside." Finding this element so scarce, he now went on deck to take a little fresh air, which that below could by no means *be called*. About eight o'clock, one of the ship's boys came, and taking hold of his hair in front instead of his hat, inquired whether Fitz wanted any breakfast.

With some difficulty, our hero once more got down numerous ladders into the cockpit. His messmates, he found, were all assembled, and consisted of five persons, namely, Mr. Pipes, his complimentary acquaintance of the morning, who had been at sea, man and boy, about forty-seven years, and even used to the briny world before that; his mother having kept a bum-boat for the supply of H. M. ships, he was, as some have said, born, but not suckled in it, and always accompanied her in every pilgrimage and servitude, whence it is supposed were derived his superior ideas of filial affection. As soon as he was old enough to lift a boat-hook, he was pressed into the "*sarvice*," to which he was sincerely attached.

He had so peculiar and forcible a voice, that he could make himself heard in the strongest wind, when the first-lieutenant with his trumpet failed. He used to walk the deck with an half-inch rattan well wolded down, and a silver pipe in his pocket. When he wanted the ship's company up quickly, he used to strike this rattan against the combings of the fore hatchway, which wonderfully accelerated their movements, as the last two or three got most considerably "welted for being last." Next to this worthy of the cockpit mess—the Agamemnon of the spot—sat Mrs.

Pipes, whom he had lately "made an honest woman," by marrying her, after she had been seventeen years on public benevolence.

She had also been a bummer's daughter; and swore at the cabin-boy with greater invention and facility than even her worthy lord, which, had you heard him in some of his more fluent hours, you would have decided with me was quite unnecessary. Her skin was somewhat the colour of new-tanned leather, and her voice when in a passion like a raven's. Her eyes, dimmed and glassy with drinking, were encircled by a red line, as if she had taken some of the boatswain's scarlet baize to fringe them with. Her teeth looked as if she had been chewing tobacco all her life; and her form, which was very visible in the absence of stays, was as far from feminine as anything female could be, and yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, old Pipes was mortally jealous of her.

The third personage at table was Mr. Chips, the carpenter; he was a tall, lean, sallow man about forty, deeply marked with the small-pox, or, as Pipes said, he had been rolled down Deal Beach before he was dry. He was a very silent man, but possessed great courage, as a proof of which Jack Pleasant had got him promoted for stopping a shot-hole in the fighting side of his ship, in action, when he was carpenter's mate.

The fourth personage in the mess was the old acquaintance of Fitzjohn, Jim Bell: in addition to what has already been said of him, it is only necessary to add that Jim had been born on board a collier, whilst beating up Swin. His mother, being the skipper's wife, used to take the helm when the crew were at dinner, so that Jim was a sailor, every inch of him, and so good a pilot for the Swin channel, one of the most dangerous on our coasts, that he used to swear he could tell where the ship was, merely by the *smell* of the soundings.

This boast of Jim's was the occasion of a joke being practised on him by dipping the sounding-lead in the most unsavoury unguent that could be compounded, *i. e.* coal-tar, bilge-water, &c., and when they asked Jim where he considered the ship to be by the smell of the soundings, he answered, half fuddled and half asleep, "Near Edinbro' "

In the early part of the *Meriky* war, as Jim used to call

the war of independence, Jim's father's craft was hired as a transport, and it so happened, that when Jim's father's vessel was no longer wanted, they wanted Jim, and without more ado, pressed Jim on board the *Arethusa*, where he had the glory of sharing in her famous action with the *Belle Poule* French frigate; so that, when Jim was half seas over, he was always ready to sing "The *Arethusy* and *Belly Pool*." He had worked his way up, unaided, to be mate of the press-gang, and was now on board the *Impetus*, mate of the hold, which, with the interest of Jack Pleasant, well known to be a bosom friend of the Prince of Wales, was sure of ending (if he behaved well) in his promotion as master or lieutenant.

Jim was a real good-hearted north-country mariner, and, as he said, whenever he had a shot in the locker, he always dropped it astern to a friend in distress. Such, then, were the members of the fore-cockpit mess; and, as Fitzjohn thought that it was with these he was to live, he almost repented him of the enthusiasm which had led to such a result.

CHAPTER VI.

As soon as Fitzjohn came down into the berth, Jim saluted him with, "I say, messmate, half an hour at this work is soon lost; so bear a hand, and bring your carcase to an anchor."

As the berth was very dim, being lighted by only one candle, for here daylight could never penetrate, Fitzjohn could not see for some time what he was doing. Sitting down at the best anchorage, as he thought, which Jim had reserved for him, he found himself just under the back of the ladder, so that the dirt from the feet of every one who came down or went up, was sure to fall into his hair or neck, or missing these, into his plate or tea-cup. Hastily rising from such a position, he had the misfortune to upset a tin tureen, half full of dirty water, in which the boy had been washing the mess things, and his messmates their hands.

On seeing this mischance, there was a general laugh at him.

"Holloa, youngster," cried Pipes, "I think you're shipping a deal of bilge water in at your stern ports; but you'll carry your helm easier before you've been aboard long."

On a tolerably dirty deal table stood, as I have before remarked, one purser's candle, stuck in a bottle, down the sides of which it had been, and still was, guttering most plentifully, from the constant draught; one black-jack, without a lip, and full of ship's beer, or "swipes," represented the beau ideal of what Mrs. Pipes emphatically called "whistle-belly wengeance;" while a tin biscuit-basket, which had once been japanned, was now full of hard flinty biscuit. In addition to this list *elegantiarum*, the said table also displayed one pewter dish, boasting of both *raw* and *boiled* pork on it, a once-red cruets-stand, with parts of three cruets, and a mustard-pot. The stoppers and mouth-pieces, having long since been destroyed, might well have given rise to Jekyll's well-known "Tears of the Cruets."

With regard to the garnishing of this hospitable board, which consisted of three half-rusty knives and three forks; it is true that these last were wanting a prong, but Fitzjohn almost ceased to lament this deficiency, when he saw with what readiness the amiable Mrs. Pipes converted them to the use of toothpicks. As to plates, in this submarine abode, they were quite out of the question, since every one took a biscuit on which to cut his pork, and varied the flavour of the latter with a slice from a large piece of a particularly unpleasant-smelling cheese, which Mrs. Pipes repeatedly wished down the internals of the purser. Nor was that all, since nothing less, she said, would satisfy her, than that a deep-sea lead and line should be hanging to it.

While poor Fitzjohn was looking on in wonder, and trying with his handkerchief to dry the effects of his last attempt at a seat, Jim Bell cut off what he called "a fid" of raw salt pork, and began frying it over the candle with one of Mrs. Pipes' forks; but, being a very cleanly fellow, he first wiped it on his sleeve.

"Mr. Bell," said Fitzjohn, in a somewhat despairing tone, "may I ask if there is no tea? What am I to eat for breakfast?"—"Eat? eat?" said Jim, "eat pork, you young beggar, as I do. I suppose you think you are in the parlour

in Harlington-street, where I dined with that ere Lord of the Hadmiralty, do you ?”

“O no, indeed,” said poor Fitz, “I am sure I’m *not there* ;” and in an instant, he could not help making a comparison between two scenes and classes of society, the one distinguished for all the soft and polished elegancies of life, the other for all its coarseness.

At this instant, some one called down the hatchway, “Turn the hands up, Mr. Pipes ; there’s a heavy squall to windward.”

The ship beginning to heel already, Pipes, Jim, and Chips, all scrambled up the ladder like so many cats ; Mrs. Pipes and our hero being left alone.

The lady immediately began, like her husband before her, to ask what made him list—such a hobbedehoy as he, was not fit for the sea—neither fish, fowl, nor good red-herring ; “Nobody makes a good sailor unless he comes in at the hawse-holes. Now, ’stead of that, I thinks you’d make a good play-hactor, but nothing better, you young spit-to-windward.” And, applying her hand under the pillow in the standing bed-place, she produced a case-bottle, out of which she poured into a japanned drinking-cup, half full of beer, what *she called* a teaspoonful of rum. It is very true that, in doing so, the rum ran from the bottle into a spoon, but continued running over the sides of the spoon so long, that there was quite as much spirit as beer.

“Now, you young griffin, do you know what we calls that ere drink ?” said she to Fitz.—“No, madam, I do not.”

“Why, we calls it dog’s-nose. Whensomever I’m troubled with the windy dropsy, it’s better for me than all the doctor’s stuff in the world.”

Hearing a step on the ladder, she suddenly whipped the cork into the bottle, and the bottle under the pillow, in the twinkling of a bed-post, as she called it.

Unfortunately for Fitz, it so happened, he had no symptoms of sea-sickness, but a most ravenous appetite, and making it a rule *utiliser les momens*, as the Frenchmen call it, with the petticoats, he, in order to get something to eat, began praising Mrs. Pipes’ affection and hardness in coming to sea with her husband—an indulgence only allowed in those days to the warrant officers.

"Why," says Mrs. Pipes, in reply, "it's not every woman that would sacrifice herself to such an old warmint as Mr. Pipes; he's plaguy hopstrokerous sometimes, but I always quiets him by a dig under the larboard lug, and I wouldn't have married him, hadn't it been for the penshin when he dies; and, although it's only twenty-five pounds a year, it's summut, you know, for a body that harn't nothing."

Here, as Fitz observed that the liberal potation of dog's-nose began to work a complaisant feeling towards him, he touched upon the comforts of some tea and buttered toast, putting his hand upon that sensitive region which lies just below the chest.

"Ay, ay," said she, "is that it? You herring-bellied fellows are the worst messmates one can have; you always eat your allowance, blow high or low. Old Chips, the carpenter, would eat a jackass and a hamper of greens any day, after he has been over the side a-caulking."

Finding that his gastronomic propensities procured him so little compassion, Fitz next led her round to give him her opinion upon the officers, beginning with the captain, who, he observed, appeared a nice gentlemanly man, although he had the air of being sickly and delicate.

"O," said this paragon of feminine delicacy, "he's well enough in his way, although he blows my husband up sometimes for walloping the fellows, he looks as if he had been eat twice over. He does not trouble us much; old George (meaning the first lieutenant) takes all the duty of the ship."

At this moment, down came Pipes himself, who observed, that "them ere fine mornings in January are like the smiles on Point-beach, never last long;" and, after getting his pea-jacket, and a three-cornered hat (something like old Trusty's Cumberland cock), which had been repaired in the cutwater with a piece of scupper leather, he said, "Peg, give us that ere case-bottle that's in the locker behind my pillow." Peg pretended she could not find it, and accused him of emptying it over-night.

"Why, you old wench-bundle!" says he, "shouldn't I have been all-seas-over if I had drunk the whole of the pint of rum got from the purser?"—"And so you was, seas-over, and twice as bad as that—as drunk as Davey's sow! I was just telling this ere new reefer" (meaning

Fitz), "how infernally hopstroporous you were in the night, and that I, was obliged to quiet you with a dig under the larboard lug."

"You lying faggot," quoth Pipes, "with all that clack of yours, I know well what it means; I dare say you have been and sweated the bottle, whilst I have been upon deck taking a reef in. Show us the bottle and we shall soon see. I saw the pint poured in, and I wouldn't let the steward put his nasty thumb* in the measure, so I know we had good allowance."

The cabin-boy coming down at this moment, Pipes gave him such a thump on his head with his open mutton fist, that made the boy's nose almost touch his waistcoat pocket, saying, "Why the devil, you young lazy cheat-the-gallows, don't you clear the decks?"—"Why, that ere gentleman," meaning Fitz, "harn't eat no breakfast."

"Then let him go without," said Pipes, "and be d—— to him; his proud stomach will soon be brought down. Come," addressing himself to Fitzjohn, "doff that fine toggery here: put on your working jacket and trowsers, and march up into the fore-top; and, as for them ere gloves, you had better throw 'em overboard: and if ever I catches you on board with them ere lady's traps on your flippers again, I'll knock ye into the middle of next week."

Before Fitz could answer this delicate hint, Pipes returned to his favourite theme, the case-bottle. Peg swore she had never seen it, and appealed to Fitz, with a knowing wink. Fitz of course expressed his astonishment at the boatswain's imagining for one moment that Mrs. Pipes could tell a lie.

"A lie!" said Pipes, "she's the greatest liar in the fleet. But I'll soon come to the truth;" and deliberately opening a chest, he took out what he called a colt, and taking her *left* arm in his *left* hand, was going to "wipe her down," as he called it, with a bit of two-and-a-half inch rope; but before the blow was struck, "There," said she, "you old thief! don't you see the neck of the bottle sticking out behind your pillow, where you left it last night?"

With the glance of a hawk, Pipes' eye fell on the matter

* The ship's steward putting his thumb in every measure, makes a difference of two gallons a day in serving a seventy-four-gun-ship's company.

in dispute, and he relinquished his hold of Mrs. Pipes, but kept the rope in his hand all ready.

"Hand it here, Peg," said he; and, holding the bottle up between his vision and the light which came down the hatchway, he soon perceived it to be what Jim would have called nearly dead low water.

"Now, you drunken old swab," resumed the lady, with all the audacity in the world, "you drinks the rum yourself and then swears it's me;" she not forgetting, by-the-bye, to swear herself, by all the gods and goddesses, that she had never tasted the divine liquor for many days.

To this Pipes replied nothing, but quickly put his arm round her neck, as Fitz thought to kiss her, but in reality to try her breath whether she had told the truth.

"You rotten faggot!" said he, in the greatest fury, "your mouth smells like the bung-hole of an empty rum-cask!"

"Mr. Pipes," cried his lady, who, now that she had exhausted the abusive, proceeded to try the sublime, "I'll take my solemn davy, that I have never touched it: wouldn't Mr. Fitzjohn have seen it, had I a done such a theivious haction?"

On this solemn adjuration, Pipes contented himself with applying the mouth of the case-bottle to his, when he soon settled the question by leaving it dry, and went growling up the ladder, swearing that he hadn't had enough to fill his hollow tooth.

Seeing how futile it was to expect a meal in such a place, it occurred to Fitz, that he would go and take his breakfast, self-invited, with the captain, and for this purpose he made his way towards the cabin-door. The marine sentinel, however, stopped him at the threshold, saying, "You can't go in there, sir."

"Why not?" said Fitz.—"Why, because none but the leaftenant of the watch, sir, can go in, unless the captain sends for them. If you want to see the captain you must send in word by his servant."

This, then, our youngster immediately did, and, in about a quarter of an hour, he was desired to *walk in*, in doing which he unhappily met the breakfast things *walking out*.

Whilst pacing the deck before breakfast, Joe Browne had advised him to ask the captain to remove him into the

after-cockpit, since he would be more comfortable, and they would be very happy to receive him, while it was impossible for any one to live with the warrant officers.

On seeing Fitzjohn enter, Captain Jack Pleasant said, "Well, Mr. Fitzjohn, what is it you want with me?"

Fitz told him that he had intended to have invited himself to breakfast with him, as he found everything so very uncomfortable where he was obliged to mess, and requested him to allow him to mess with the midshipsmen—to which Jack plumply answered, "We will think of it in six months time, but it is absolutely necessary that you should learn to rough it." On this, Fitz muttered something about "I'd rather go ashore," when Jack pointed with his finger through one of the quarter-ports, and observed, "One must be a good swimmer to reach it."

On this, Fitz very gravely said he quite agreed with him, as the Bill of Portland was scarcely visible. Bursting out into a loud laugh, Jack then told him that nothing was left for him but to grin and bear it, though he was sure that Jim Bell would take great care of him, as he was an old and particular friend of his mother's. The captain then went on deck. At twelve o'clock, Fitz repaired to the fore-cockpit again, since that was the hour of dinner; but it was in vain he tried to eat: he did indeed cram down some shin of beef soup, out of the same tureen in which he had taken a hip-bath in the morning; but he found it so highly seasoned with galley-pepper, which on shore is called cinder-dust, and the biscuit so hard and flinty, that he began almost to despair of existence; and from sheer hunger was obliged to gulp the three-cornered pieces, and wash them down in the best way he could, with a draught from the lipless black-jack. Rum-and-water he detested, and the salt meat he could not get over; so that they began to vote him a good messmate.

All this was very miserable; and Fitzjohn began to form an opinion of his conduct, which has no doubt been similarly entertained by every mortal being that ever went to sea; namely, that he was a very great fool;—so great a fool, indeed, that even old Trusty seemed wise by comparison.

In the afternoon watch, Joe Browne invited him to tea in the starboard berth, and whilst down there, re-

minded him that there was a hamper of wine aboard, which had come to Portsmouth by the waggon.

This Fitz had totally forgotten, but now remembered with delight. He had it brought down and opened forthwith; when, to the unspeakable joy of all present, there were found in it, three hams, half-a-dozen dried tongues, six tin cases of captains' biscuits, tea, sugar, a variety of little sea-stores, and at the bottom, his school-satchel, full of Greek and Latin books.

On seeing these, all his shipmates crowded round; and as if by instinctive antipathy, they were *nem. con.* condemned to go overboard; which sentence would have been immediately carried into effect, had not Fitz observed among the number his mother's family Bible, in a green leathern case. All that had belonged to her, now seemed possessed of a treble interest; this, therefore, he of course took out, though he did not unbutton the case, lest the other mids should descry its contents. As soon as tea was finished, they committed the satchel, filled with books, to the deep, with due ceremony, through one of the stern-ports, all the mess having put on their dress-hats and sword-belts for the occasion. The middies of the starboard berth then voted Fitzjohn and his hams such desirable messmates, that a petition was got up to the first-lieutenant, to intercede with the captain, to remove him aft to mess with them.

Joe Browne, having the middle watch, gave him up his hammock at midnight, and on the next day, at dinner, he was duly installed as a member of the starboard berth. Having taken his leave of Mrs. Pipes, he also took that opportunity of presenting her with a ham, two tongues, and a bottle of rum, in return for which he was invited to *come there* as often as he chose, she undertaking to mend his stockings and sew on buttons, whenever he might require the same: but, although he was, in the course of duty, obliged to go to the fore-cockpit very often, to learn splicing and knotting from Pipes, it still never entered his head to *intrude at meal times*.

It was very shortly after this period that the Impetus arrived off the Black Rocks. Here the officers found a magnificent British fleet of twenty-three sail of the line, besides frigates, sloops, and fireships; and, as Jack Plea-

sant had named Fitz one of his aides-de-camp, himself and another middy accompanied him on board the three-decker which carried the admiral's flag.

Here the captain remained on board to dinner, and in the evening the youngsters returned to fetch him; as soon as they had got on board the *Impetus*, the barge was hoisted in, and they made sail, leaving the fleet upon a cruise, in company with another line-of-battle ship and a frigate.

CHAPTER VII.

By this time, Fitzjohn, having roughed the first and most uncomfortable part of his profession, soon found himself very easy, if not happy. His messmates were good fellows; and the first-lieutenant told him, that as he had had time to hang his hammock up, he should put him in a watch with the other mids, and that he was not to do duty in the foretop, as the captain had intended.

The name of this first-lieutenant was George Moss. He was an Orkney man, and had spent all his life at sea,—so that his teeth were worn down to the segment of a circle from eating hard biscuit. He was brave, honourable, and kind-hearted, though strict; and the captain had the highest confidence in him, which he never abused.

The ship's company of the *Impetus* had served in a former line-of-battle ship, with Jack, as they all called the captain. They both loved and esteemed him, and, almost to a man, would have laid down their lives at his command.

Often did Fitz observe, that when his weak, tottering frame was slipping on the deck, and nearly overbalanced by the rolling of the ship, the anxious eyes of the crew were upon him, and would, had they dared, have taken him in their arms, to save him from falling against the lee-side of the bulwarks. He never punished without just cause; but then it was with proper severity, and not to make light of such a serious disgrace.

The second-lieutenant was a steady Scotchman, regular in his habits and at his duty, and a good seaman; and indeed I may say that all the officers were of the same description, so that it would be almost impossible to single out one for praise before another. They had all been

selected by the captain, who, from being a man of powerful interest, had in those days the means of doing that which ought always to be at the option of every commanding officer, if the Sovereign wishes to have a well-organised and effective navy.

A few nights after the departure of the *Impetus* from the fleet, a large ship was discovered under their lee. As they had not seen their consorts for two or three days, they at first concluded it was a friend; but, receiving no answer to their private signal, the ship was cleared for action, and kept by the wind, until she was perfectly ready; while they could observe, by the lights through her lower-deck ports, that the stranger was making the same preparation.

The captain had been confined to his cabin for some days, owing to his delicate health and the bad weather; but, as soon as George Moss had reported the ship ready for action, the little man, with difficulty, got hold of the binnacle on the quarter-deck. Fitz, in his ignorance, had often wondered how such an infirm body could do its duty in the day of battle; but he had now an opportunity of seeing.

The sea running high, it was with great difficulty the lower-deck ports could be opened; the private night-signal was still flying; and, as one of Jack's aides-de-camp, Fitz was of course close to him, with his pencil and blank book, to write down any orders he might receive for the officers commanding the lower tiers of guns. At first, he felt very much excited and anxious, and his thoughts naturally reverted to one who was almost the only friend he had ever known—his mother; while never having heard any guns of a larger calibre than those fired at the king's birthday in St. James's Park, he began to think of stopping his ears with pieces of his pocket-handkerchief, which he had ready in his hand to tear up for that purpose, when his reveries were interrupted by the captain's calling the first-lieutenant and master to him, and saying to them—"Mr. Thomson," addressing the master in a cool, steady, and determined voice, "*Lay her within pistol-shot to windward;*" to Mr. Moss, "Give orders that all the guns are double-shotted, and see that not a shot is fired until the ship is brought to the wind alongside the enemy."

Fitz, on hearing these sailor-like directions, looked up at his commander with redoubled veneration. "Who," thought he, "would have dreamt that the heart of the British lion lived so powerfully in that weak and emaciated body?" As Fitz had brought up his sword and a brace of pocket-pistols his trustee had given to him (supposing, as all young beginners do, that it would come to a personal fight), he grasped the handle of his toasting fork, which hung by his side, internally vowing that no man should approach his captain, but through his body: and it is in such moments as these, that reverential love and adoration for a commander are conceived, which have been known to fire with the purest flame even bosoms impenetrable to any other feeling.

As soon as Moss had reported the above orders as having been given and executed, the captain said, in a clear voice, which the dead silence rendered audible even on the main-deck, "Now, Mr. Thomson, you may order the helm to be put up: remember the directions I have given you, and adhere to them strictly."

Previously to this, however, a funny scene occurred. As soon as the lieutenants had reported their quarters clear for action to the first-lieutenant, who, from being very near-sighted, was nick-named Blind Bob, he went round the decks, to examine them, before making his report to Captain Pleasant.

As the fighting lanthorns were hanging up amidships, and shed a very dim light, Bob was obliged to assist his near sight, by groping with his hand: and, when arrived at the aftermost gun on the main-deck, opposite to where the marine sentinel stood at the ward-room door, he suddenly exclaimed, "Who's this d——d rascal, lying down here with his great-coat on? Come out here, that I may report you to the captain! A pretty time, when the ship's just going into action, to be skulking in the lee scuppers:" when, feeling a little farther, he exclaimed, "O ho! you scoundrel, so you've got a powder-horn in your fist, too; you deserve six dozen, you blackguard, and you shall have it, too; are you not ashamed to be found here, when all the ship's company are at quarters?—why don't you speak, you scoundrel? Here, sentinel, bring a light; let's see who he is, and what gun he belongs to."

On hearing all this fuss, the sentry of course came running up with the light: this being brought, the atrocious defaulter, the cowardly skulker, the scoundrel who would not speak, proved to be no less a personage than old Billy, a favourite sheep, which the crew had so named, Blind Bob having mistaken his woolly coat for a seaman's grego, and his frontal exuberance for a powder-horn. On seeing this, the first-lieutenant looked of course very foolish and angry; but his good nature prevailing, he laughed heartily at his mistake, and turning very kindly to the men at the neighbouring quarters, he said, "I'm glad to have made such a blunder, my lads; for I always thought there was neither man nor boy in the Impetus who would flinch from his gun."

On inquiry, he now found that Billy was a great favourite with the ship's company, and, instead of putting him in the launch, with the rest of the live stock, as is customary in clearing for action, they had stowed him away near the after-gun.

After this, whenever any of the middies were found caulking it in their watch on deck, with their gregos on, the bye-word was "they had been Billying it."

They were now under easy and manageable sail, the enemy lying-to, evidently waiting for them, when, just as the ship was rounding to, the signal officer called out, "The stranger has answered the private signal."

"Pass close under her stern, then, Mr. Thomson," said the captain; "and Mr. Moss, let the men remain at their guns; but be careful not a shot is fired."

On passing within hail of our new consort, we found she was an English ship of the line, and the captain being junior to Jack, he ordered him to come on board.

The next day being Sunday, and the weather moderate, after mustering at divisions, the captain had prayers. Every middy was, of course, obliged to appear at church, and, on preparing to go there, Fitzjohn had recourse to the green-cased Bible. Having taken it out to mark the lessons, he there found a long letter from his mother, and in it a ten pound note, together with a second letter, also addressed to him, but subscribed on the outside, "To be opened at the first foreign port you arrive at."

The middies, on seeing this, of course had their jokes, and

swore he was under sealed orders, to be opened in a certain latitude, endeavouring to persuade him to open them at once, which he was fully determined *not* to do, as he most strictly adhered to his mother's wishes on all occasions, when, it may be added, they did not interfere with his own.

A general overhaul of the Bible was now voted, when the first object Fitz observed, pinned to a leaf, were the following words—"My simple piety teaches me to regard the Almighty as our common Father, in whose constant presence we live, and on whose constant bounty we ought to rely." Almost before he was aware of what he was doing, he had read these lines aloud in the berth, and dissolute as is the tone of manners generally prevailing a man-of-war cockpit, still their humble beauty was even there so well appreciated as to command a silence, that would have done credit to any religious society. As for Fitzjohn, he could not help dropping a tear to the memory of her who, with such affectionate solicitude, had thus endeavoured to provide for all his wants; blamed himself for not having examined the contents of the hamper earlier, in order that he might have answered her long and third letter—a reply which he determined should not be deferred after the morrow. This was the more efficiently done, as during the next day they captured a fast-sailing French privateer, the *Impetus* far outsailing the ship of the line, and frigate in company with her; and as the privateer was to be sent into port, it afforded Fitz an opportunity of writing to England, which he did from his heart.

Although he had ceased messing in the fore-cockpit, he still went down every forenoon to receive his lesson of knotting and splicing; and, from the very great kindness of Mrs. Pipes, together with the ham and tongues, he found he had made great progress in what may be supposed she would have termed her "affections." One day, on presenting himself, she upbraided him very severely, in her own language, for having employed the sergeant of marines' wife to sew on a shirt collar, which had been nearly torn off in that pleasant amusement called skylarking.

"You Point-Beach spawn," said she, "so you've had that ere soger's wife to herring-bone your collar, have you? I'll let you know what it is, if you hirritate a var-

tuous young woman!" and with-that, she gave him such a slap with her open hand on the side of his face, that he felt his cheek-bone on fire for the next two days, and fancied some of his hinder teeth were loose; "I'll wallop you, you salvagee!" continued she; applying her foot nearly at the same instant *à posteriori*, with a degree of vigour that made him think of the Roman battering ram—"next time that you wexes me, you warmint, I'll make you think a horse kick'd you."

Having contrived to get out of the way as quickly as possible, Fitz, from that time, made up his mind not to make himself quite so agreeable.

As he used, however, to take his station on the foretop-sail-yard occasionally, he found Pipes also more unkind than usual, and, on one occasion, when he ordered him out to the lee-earing, blowing so strong that they were close-reefing, Fitz positively refused to go, feeling that he could not hold on.

Upon this, the boatswain talked of fetching up the *colt*, or piece of two-and-a-half-inch rope, which, as I have said before, he kept in his chest for Mrs. Pipes' accommodation.

No sooner did he mention this, than Fitzjohn told him if he dared to strike him he'd do his utmost to knock some of his teeth down his throat. The boatswain here reminded him, that anybody striking, or offering to strike, his superior officer, would have to dance upon nothing at the fore-yard arm.

Notwithstanding this little explosion, Pipes became every day more rigid and unpleasant, until Fitz began to make excuses from going into the fore-cockpit, and Pipes invariably complained to Mr. Moss, who insisted upon his attending to that part of his duty; while he soon found from Jim Bell that the fair Peg used to talk of him to Pipes, in a way that made the latter think Fitzjohn was too intimate there.

Now it so happened one evening, that our hero was obliged to go down to take his knotting and splicing lesson at that hour, instead of the morning, the boatswain having been all day too busy to attend to him.

The moment Fitz got into the berth, Mrs. Pipes threw her arm around his neck, and began kissing him, and in so

doing capsized the memorable bottle which held the candle, leaving them both in darkness. At that instant, they heard Pipes coming down. Mrs. Peg wished Fitz to hide himself in the standing bed-place; but this he resolutely refused, knowing he had done nothing to be ashamed of. Seeing that he was immovable, she herself vanished; and, as soon as Pipes arrived at the top of the fore-cockpit ladder, Fitz called out, "Mr. Pipes, the candle is gone out; pray order a light to be brought down!"

"The light out!" roared Pipes, "then it's for some hidden parpus that you have dowsed the glim, you d—— young adulterator; but now I'll know the truth on't. Here, master-at-arms!" calling to that functionary, who was going his rounds on the lower-deck.

"Did you call, sir?" said the master-at-arms.—"Yes; bring the light, I say. Here's a thundering midshipmite in the dark, playing old Tommy with my wife."

This annunciation, as may be well supposed, quickly brought the master-at-arms, and down they both came.

Pipes, snatching the lanthorn out of the other's hand, had no sooner got below than he seized Fitz by the neck-cloth, so that he was almost strangled, and rapping out a volley of oaths, demanded, "Where's Peg?"

"How should I know?" replied Fitzjohn.

"I dare say I shall find her in dock," quoth Pipes; and, putting his hand into the bed-place, he seized the unhappy Peg by one of her legs, she, in her hurry, having laid her feet where her head ought to have been.

"Here you be," said the indignant Pipes, "bung up and bilge free! Come out here, whilst I haxes you some few questions," drawing Peg out in the most reckless manner. She soon, however, got upon her feet, and looking stedfastly at Fitz to know, as she told him afterwards, whether he "would blow her or not," she burst out into the most dreadful and convulsive fit of tears and sobbing: so much so, that Fitz really feared she would have been choked: he therefore recommended sending for the doctor.

"I'll doctor her," said Pipes. "On the lower-deck, there, bring me down a wet swab, that's the best cure in the world for stericks."

In a minute, fair Peg's tears vanished. She let fly at her spouse such a broadside of oaths, as he confessed he did not

hear every day in the week, and then appealed to Fitzjohn, whether she had ever allowed him to take the slightest liberties with her, or "whether she had ever hax'd him for such a thing."

Fitz, of course, like a gentleman of honour, took Peg's part most stoutly, but the more he vouched for her innocence, the more furiously jealous Pipes became, and not only disbelieved her, but vented a vast deal of abuse on him.

Peg, in her turn, fought boldly for the youngster, and said at last, "she'd be blowed if she wouldn't be rowed round the buoy* as soon as the ship anchored, and leave old Mr. Pipes for an obstroperous, ungraciousful blackguard, and remain with the young reefer."

This idea so horrified Fitzjohn, that he vowed and protested against any intention of poaching on the rights of Mr. Pipes.

"Howsomdever, be it as how 'twill," said the boatswain, "I shall speak to the first-lieutenant and the captain to-morrow morning. We'll put you to rights in the forenoon watch: you won't be the first reefer that's been wip'd down at the gangway. And now be off out of this, or I'll knock your front rails out at the nape of your neck."

It did not require this delicate insinuation from Pipes to induce Fitzjohn to withdraw as quickly as possible, though it must be said he felt very uneasy all night at the broad hint of applying to the captain; but, at any rate, he was determined not "to blow" Mrs. Pipes, as she called it.

The next morning poor Fitz awoke with a nasty foreboding feeling at his heart. The hours stole on with an oppressive weight, and at ten o'clock the quarter-master came down below, and desired him to attend the captain in his cabin directly.

On going thither, he found the captain and the chaplain were the only persons present; but, as he went into the after-cabin, he observed Pipes in the anterior one, with something tucked under his left arm, which he at first took for a spying-glass. On looking at it a second time, however, he perceived some smaller cords attached, and on each cord several knots; in short, it was a new and disagreeable acquaintance—the cat-o'-nine tails.

* A sea phrase, equivalent to being sold in the market-place.

"So, sir," said Jack Pleasant, looking, however, very severe, "I find you come to sea to introduce immorality and vice amongst my youngsters, do you?"—"What vice, sir?" inquired Fitzjohn, repeating the word.

"Why, sir, I understand you were caught in bed with Mrs. Pipes in the dog-watch last night; I tell you, sir, I won't have any cat-a-wauling in my ship. You must wait until you get ashore for these affairs. You Westminster boys are devilish bad ones. I am only sorry I've taken you into my ship at all."

"These immoralities, sir," said the chaplain, officiously putting in his oar, and addressing himself to the captain, "should be nipped in the bud."

"Now, sir," resumed the captain, "what have you got to say for yourself?—come, plain truth—no lying."

"I declare most solemnly, sir," replied Fitzjohn, "that so far from having been in bed with Mrs. Pipes, it is a thing that never entered my head, nor ever will; I should only wish to ask you, sir, if you've ever seen the lady; the sight of her alone, I should think, would acquit me."

"O that won't do, that's an old story; you youngsters steer for any port in a storm."

"True, sir! alas, sir, too true," ejaculated the chaplain, lifting up his hands.

"However," resumed Jack, "it is but fair that his accuser should be present," and he sent immediately for Mr. Moss and Pipes.

When Pipes came in, Jack said, "So you caught young Fitzjohn in bed with your wife, Mr. Pipes?"—"No, sir," quoth Pipes, "I cotch'd him just coming out of bed."

"Why, how now, Mr. Pipes?" interrupted Moss; "I thought you declared that you caught him *in* bed, and not out of it. If this was all, how do you know he was coming out of bed?"—"Why I know'd it," said Pipes, "because my missis had dows'd the glim, and began piping her eyes, which she always does when I catches her in her dirty tricks."

"Did you ever suspect her, then, before?"

Moss here reminded Jack of some story about the black cook.

"Ah, ha!" quoth the captain, with a knowing wink to the chaplain, which he thought Fitz did not see. "An old

offender this ; come, now, Mr. Pipes, what have you got to say about Fitzjohn and your wife last evening, eh ?”

“ Now I won’t tell no lies about it to your honour,” returned the boatswain, “ but I fancies as how Peg has taken a liking to this young chap, for she calls him her fancy man, ever since he gammoned her over with a ham and two tongues ; and you know, your honour, it’s not the thing to have another craft in the same dock. When I’m at sea I don’t care about being perticklar to a shade, or what game she’s after, for then I knows nothing about it.”

The captain began to enjoy the joke, and, as Moss had got Mrs. Pipes in the fore-cabin, he proposed to obtain leave to bring her in.

“ Well, Mrs. Pipes,” said Jack, “ what’s all this about ?” — “ My husband, your honour, Mr. Pipes, your boatswain, is a jealous old Turk. He won’t let that ere young reefer be quiet, your honour, for a minute, because as how he happened to give me a ham and two tongues, besides his four days’ hallowance of rum, where we first came out on the cruise. Now, as I likes being graciousful, I promised to sew on his buttons, mend his stockings, and do all his hodd jobs for him whenever he hasks me ; now your honour knows he comes down to our cabin two hours a day, except a Sunday, that my husband might larn him to knot and to splice. Yesterday, your honour knows, we split the fore-top sail, and as Pipes was busy on deck, the young gemman waited there for the two hours, when away he goes ; so when Pipes comes down, I says, ‘ Young Fitzjohn’s been here.’ ‘ Well, Peg,’ says he, ‘ I suppose you taught him to make a double splice, for you are a deuced sight too fond of that young fellow.’ Last hevening, your honour, down comes young Fitzjohn, and as I was going for to hoffer him a chair, your honour, I knocks down the candlestick, which is only a bottle, and out goes the glim. Just as I had got my foot on the locker to get the tinder-box, I slips into my bed-place from the rolling of the ship, down cums Pipes and calls the master-at-arms. He was in such a flustration, that I thought he would have choked the boy. Out he pulls me in such a hindecent manner, your honour, that the master-at-harms told our boy——”

“ Well, well, my good woman, never mind that——” — “ No, of course not, your honour. Now, your honour, no honest

young woman can put up with that ere sort of husage.' Upon which, as a wind up to her eloquence, she set to crying most furiously.

"Please your honour," says Pipes, "that there's all crocodile—she'll cry when she likes;—if your honour warn't here, she'd swear worser than a trooper."—"Well, well, Mr. Pipes, you must use your wife as a woman ought to be used."

"So I says, your honour," roared out Mrs. Pipes; "but, your honour, he's of no more use than a tailor, and that everybody knows is the ninth part of a man, your honour."

The captain's patience began to wear out, and he therefore very briefly gave them to understand, that if there was any more quarrelling, she should not come to sea in the ship again. He then told Fitzjohn he had nothing further to say to him, while Fitz heard him mutter to Moss,—“No temptation that, or devilish bad taste.” As one good result of this unfortunate scene, Moss ordered Fitz in future to do duty on the forecastle, and to take his splicing and knotting lessons there.

Pipes, however, always kept a bright look out on him, as he called it, and, if Fitz was not on the forecastle by the time the sound was out of the bell, was sure to be what he termed “down upon him.”

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME days after the eventful history recorded in the last chapter, the *Impetus* had to encounter a very heavy gale of wind, the sea running mountains high. The sails were nearly all furled, excepting the double-reefed foresail and the storm staysails; and, so extremely apprehensive was the master that his ship would be wrecked on the rocks called “The Saintes,” that the officers remained on deck all night on some sails, got up under the poop-awning. As one of the lieutenants had charge of the forecastle, Moss allowed Fitzjohn to come aft and remain under the poop-awning.

The anxious master, whose face bespoke the serious doubts he entertained, went repeatedly below to consult the chart which laid open on the wardroom-table; and our youngster going down to hold the light, saw him shake his

head in mournful presage, when he found she could neither weather the rocks on one tack nor the land on the other; coming up he went into the cabin, and in a few minutes after Jack Pleasant came on deck. He was cold, shivery, and appeared more feeble than ever, to Fitz, who kept close to his side, and watched every muscle of his face.

The ship laboured most severely, her main-deck guns rolling their muzzles in the sea. About three in the morning the look-out man called out, "Breakers nearly ahead!" This report the master instantly confirmed.

"Now then," said the captain, in a manner as cool and collected as when Fitzjohn first saw him at the port-admiral's table, "wear ship, Mr. Moss, if you please."

This order was complied with, and so completely did the captain's manner impress both his officers and crew, that no hurry or over-anxiety, cursing or swearing, accompanied the evolution, which was rapidly effected. Scarcely, however, had the sails filled, when there came a sudden lull; and, at this critical moment, when every soul was on deck, expecting the horrors of instant shipwreck and death in the dark dead of night, amid a howling and frightful sea, the wind chopped six points round and enabled them to lay their course.

At first, the master could not believe in this interposition betwixt them and a dreadful fate, till at length, when he saw the fact confirmed, not only by the dog-vane, but by the coming round of the ship's head, he was speechless. Nor was it the master alone who was thus powerfully affected, for on the deck of that line-of-battle ship you could not, for the space of three minutes, have detected any living sound beside the creaking of the timbers and the roaring of the gale.

It was soon evident that, unless the wind chopped round again, all immediate danger was over; and, as some of the shot had got out of their places in the racks, and were rolling about the deck, Fitzjohn feared that these might crush his captain's toes: he therefore offered him his arm to assist him on the gratings of the after-hatchway, which he accepted very graciously, and then observed, "I hope you are not thinking of the boatswain's wife *now*, Mr. Gentleman Jack!" This was the first time that the captain had ever addressed him by his *sobriquet*, and Fitz was, till now,

therefore, not aware that he was acquainted with it. Indeed, our hero had often entertained thoughts of putting it down *vi et armis*; but, on finding Saul among the prophets, as it were, he reflected that his nickname was as good as any of the sort, and for ever abandoned his hopes of extinguishing what might, after all, be followed by something still less pleasant. He therefore contented himself with replying to the captain in the negative; and the skipper, smiling at his own joke—as skippers, by the way, are always condescending enough to do—withdrew.

The course of the *Impetus* continued for some weeks, till at length, one morning at daybreak, Fitz was routed out by some of his messmates coming down to his hammock, and bawling out,—“I say, you Gentleman Jack, it’s time to open your sealed orders, as the rock of Lisbon’s in sight.”

On hearing this, Fitz bundled out, even before his eyes were well unbuttoned, and opened his mother’s letter, which contained a five-pound note, with positive directions to lay it out in fruit and anti-scorbutics, at the first port they made on their voyage, as she called it.

These orders were accordingly strictly attended to at the earliest moment; and amongst other things so purchased were oranges and limes. In the evening, the caterer proposed making a bowl of rum-punch to drink the health of Fitz’s mother—the which they did with the greater devotion, as Jim Bell’s favourite topic, when well primed, was to set off in as raving a description of her personal beauty and kindness, as the most exquisite belle could require—always greatly distracted, be it confessed, whether he should most admire the aforesaid virtues, or the liberal manner in which, according to his choice phrase, “she baled out her brandy and wine.”

As soon as the mids were all seated round the mess-table, each one having provided himself with some article out of which to drink, the gale of wind having materially diminished the crockery, Fitz’s early friend, Jim Bell, was, as I have hinted, foremost amongst the group; and, to such extremity were they reduced, that four of them were obliged to drink from the spout of the tea-pot, the caterer giving the word of command to pass it from one to the other. Eagerly as poor Lady Fitzjohn longed, by her lonely fire-side, to see her son at that very moment, we may doubt whether

beholding him engaged in such an equivocal bacchanalian would have greatly cheered her :—so fortunate it is that our senses are not always as unlimited as our desires.

“Gentlemen,” said the caterer, “I propose that no one has a second swill of punch who does not know the logarithm for making it :”—upon which he began questioning the youngest, and, in succession, to Gentleman Jack. Of this, seven were quite ignorant ; but, as it was a particular and extraordinary treat, they were all excused, and partook with the rest. Lest, however, my readers should be in the same predicament, and so at any future time stand a chance of being shared out of the honours and enjoyments of the pewter teapot spout, the logarithm alluded to is as follows :—

“As radius is to the distance run,
Is a pound of sugar to a bottle of rum ;
And, as difference of latitude is to the departure,
So is the lime-juice to the water.”

The cockpit messes, in these days, were totally different to the dandy mess-places of the present age. One boy only was allowed to cook and do all that thirteen required ; and all day long there was a continued brawl of “You d—d boy, where are you ?” In addition to this, those embryo heroes cleaned their own shoes, made their own beds, and, when they dined with the captain, generally had to wash their own stockings—that is, if they could not reef them, to hide low-water-mark, as they used to call the black line made by the shoe-binding. Some old hands, long practised in the trade, could take as many as four reefs in, which consists in tucking the dirty part into the shoe, so that the part shown between the bottom of the trowser and the shoe appeared tolerably white. But these were most fortunate rascals !—quite lads of genius in their line.

The collar and wristbands of their shirts were also objects of their ablutionary care ; and each took it by turns to pick the stones out of the raisins, to make their puddings, the rule being, that whilst picking them, they were obliged to whistle, as a proof they were not eating any. The moment the whistling ceased, books, quadrant-cases, &c., flew at the head of the offender, by way of reminding him that he was well watched.

When these happy vagabonds had cards, it was seldom that they could muster more than one pack, and, by way of

recollecting who dealt last, the dealer used to wear an old cocked hat, and pass it to the next when the hand was up. There was at this time also a barbarous custom of examining the sick men in the cockpit. Accordingly, sore legs and all kinds of disagreeables were obliged here to present themselves.

As the surgeon never would allow more than a certain number on the sick-list at one time, the consequence was, that when that number was complete, any application, however urgent, was answered by, "You be d—d, I won't have any more on the sick-list to-day;" and often again and again, the seamen would be heard to say, "Come, Jack, bear a hand out of the sick-list, it's my turn next." By this means, the ship always appeared by the returns, to be healthy: whether this was right is another question.

If a poor fellow presented himself with a long and pitiful face, the doctor, before he felt his pulse, used to say, "You are a cursed skulker!—I know you of old—no sham-Abrahams with me;—go to the devil, you rascal!—I won't hear a word!"—and if, by dint of persuasion, he looked at the man's tongue, he always got rid of him by saying, "If you are not better to-morrow, you must leave off drinking grog." This prescription acted like magic on every sort of complaint; but the result of the whole system was a complete squeeze; and a fight, on the cockpit ladder, almost daily took place, to be one of the first eighteen, since this was the number to which our eccentric surgeon limited the sick-list in a seventy-four-gun-ship's complement in the winter time.

I have already said, or ought to have said, that the mid-ship berth was occupied by the assistant surgeons, denominated at that time doctor's mates, the captain's clerks, and two mates; and it was voted the best mess in the cockpit, because the doctor's mates always took care of the victualing department, and it was therefore well supplied with portable soup, chocolate, lime-juice, &c. &c.;—all of which his Majesty had, of course, very piously intended for the use of the sick. We may conclude, therefore, that these poor gentlemen were always sick,—or trying their best, as it were, to illustrate the maxim, "Physician, cure thyself!" The purser was an excellent man, and was supposed to be the best purser in the fleet; or, in other words, he under-

stood the art of making more money out of the ship's company's bellies than any other;—on the principle of Horace—if he knew it—I presume, “*Venter magister artium.*”

The foolish policy of those days was, to give the purser a very low salary, and allow him to make large emoluments:—for example, the *Impetus*, a seventy-four-gun-ship, with seven hundred and twenty men on board, gave the purser but seventy pounds a-year; but his annual emoluments amounted, at the least, to a pound a man; so that the crew literally had not enough to eat, as the purser (or Nipcheese, as this genus is denominated) was obliged to pillage, by false weights and measures, a certain quantity of food, for which the Victualling Office allowed even him only *half the sum* as credit, that they themselves had paid for it on contract. This was holding out a direct—though, it is true, a most mean and miserable—premium for his roguery, and ultimately laid the foundation of the mutiny at Spithead.

Many a time did Fitz behold, with indignation and grief, a four-pound piece of beef so shrivelled up, that Jack Tar could cover it all with both hands, and yet this was a dinner for seven men: they used to propose woolding it with rope-yarns, to make it go farther, and in this miserable pittance there was no taste of meat, as all the provisions served out at that time were ordered to have been at least seven years in store. The same proportion for the purser was taken from their bread, butter, cheese, grog, &c.

The time allotted for the cruise being ended, the *Impetus* rejoined the fleet, and in a few days returned to Spithead, where the youngsters had all their turns on duty in the boats, and leave on shore. As the ship progressed in her refit, Mr. Pipes kept the hand of Gentleman Jack pretty well in the tar-bucket, and used to swear that “if he didn’t larn to raise a mouse on the main stay, he’d raise a mouse over one of his eyes.” For which Fitz, as in duty bound, duly thanked him.

Soon after the arrival of the *Impetus* at Spithead, Fitz was one day crossing the water, from Portsmouth to Gosport, and, whilst waiting in the boat to complete her number, a very respectably-dressed seaman, bearing the appearance of a quarter-master, got into the boat, and they shoved

off. There was something very attractive in his rough, honest countenance, and Gentleman Jack asked him to what ship he belonged.

He answered, "The Cæsar."

Fitz asked him whether he belonged to that ship in the battle of the first of June.

"Yes, sir," he replied; "*but it was not my fault, sir,*" alluding to the slack conduct of that vessel, in the battle of the first of June, as Lord Howe's action is called.

This answer, and all that it inferred, made an impression on the mind of our hero that he never forgot. And I mention this otherwise trivial incident, to show to officers that not only their own feelings and reputation, but those of every individual under their command, are, in the hour of action, wholly dependent on their abilities and conduct.

CHAPTER IX.

THE channel fleet had by this time returned, and the Impetus, as well as the rest of the ships, were at length all refitted for sea, when one morning the admiral having made the signal to unmoor ship, to the utter astonishment of the officers not a seaman would touch the capstan bars, but remained sullenly below: and, notwithstanding Pipes swore, and rattled his cane, not a man would come up.

"What's the sarvice come to, now?" says Pipes, bewildered with rage and surprise.

On finding this to be the case, Moss went down on the lower-deck, and Fitz followed him: the crew sat quiet at their respective mess-tables; they all got up, and treated the first-lieutenant with the greatest respect, as he passed fore and aft the deck; but all persisted in not doing any more duty until their grievances were redressed. Moss, on hearing this declaration, went into the cabin to inform the captain of the state of the ship.

Captain Pleasant came out with the greatest coolness; the marines were drawn up under arms on the poop, and he at once ordered the hands to be turned up and to come aft.

When they were all assembled, he reminded them of the duty they owed their country, and that he who had led them into battle, and had been at their head in every

danger, was the best person to whom to confide their supposed grievances—that he would then be the first to assist them, and carry their petition to the foot of the throne, if necessary. He further informed them, that if any attempt at violence was offered to any officer or other person in the ship, the man so offering it should die by his hand.

Fitz could not help admiring, on this occasion, as he had often done before, the cool, calm, and determined manner of his superior's address, and, although there were six hundred men around him, who could have killed him with one blow, they listened to him with the greatest patience and attention.

No sooner had the captain concluded his address, than eight men, who called themselves delegates, stepped forward, and the leading man, the ship's painter, nicknamed by his shipmates Bonaparte, being the spokesman, gave Captain Pleasant a well-written paper, containing a list of their grievances, which, from another copy, he was going to read, but the captain stopped him, and, as he seemed determined to persist, turned round to look at the marines, who were drawn up athwart and in front of the poop.

Upon meeting the captain's eye, they all grounded arms, and began stowing away their muskets in the arm-chests.

The captain of marines endeavoured to interfere, but the painter called out, "Our brethren the marines think like us, and are determined to have their just rights."

The captain here seemed very much inclined to make a hole in the painter's body, but reflecting a moment, ordered the barge to be manned. Lieutenant Moss was now despatched to the commander-in-chief, and returned in a short time, with a report, that all the fleet entertained the same mutinous disposition. At twelve o'clock, every ship in the fleet manned the rigging, and gave three cheers.

At this period of the war, it had been customary to let the crew of one ship visit the others on a Sunday, during which visits the plans had been so well arranged, and the secret so well kept, that not an officer in seventeen sail-of-the-line had the least idea of what was going forward: it was remarked that in each ship there was one clever half-bred lawyer-kind of a fellow, who always went by some *sobriquet*, and not unfrequently named, like our painter,

“Bonaparte.” This *chef d’état major* drew up their papers, and acted as a kind of secretary to his own ship.

The men conducted themselves with a great deal of alacrity; the discipline was extremely severe, and their punishments inflicted by themselves were cruel—never less than six dozen, even for what they considered at other times the *trifling error* of drunkenness; and any man or woman who brought spirits into the ship, was tied up to the fore yard-arm, with a handspike or crow-bar between the legs, and let go by the run three times, into the sea.

In order that the reader may form some adequate idea of the discipline of the seamen at this time, I need only describe a scene which took place on board the ship of Gentleman Jack.

Determined that, as far as possible, there should at least be some originality in their proceedings, the mutineers would not follow the usual routine of the man-of-war, even as to the place of punishment (the gangway); they therefore lashed the culprit, on such occasions, to the spare anchor stock, and to the belaying pins on the fore-castle.

Soon after the outbreak of the mutiny, as the officers were deprived of their side-arms, they took the whole discipline of the ship on themselves, although the first-lieutenant went through the usual routine of ordering the sails to be loosened and furled, and the hawse to be cleared when this was required. When any one, however, was to be tried, which was always done before punishment, a kind of board of inquiry was held on the main-deck grating, with a table, and a seat for each member, and screens all around. The case which I am about to describe happened thus.

The man-servant of the starboard berth (Tom Bennett by name) was seen drunk on the second evening of the mutiny. At ten o’clock the next morning, the court assembled, composed of one chief boatswain’s-mate, two captains of the fore-castle, three captains, one of each top, one master of arms, one captain afterguard, one sergeant of marines, one carpenter’s-mate, and one purser’s steward; the painter, being the only one that could read or write, acted at once as president and secretary. Fitzjohn being a witness attended the court. The letter of subpoena was as follows:—“Mister Fitzjohn, sir, the seemen and theer

brothers the marines, been detarmend to tri Tom Bennett for been rowling drunk last night, you are wonted has a witnes at the corte to be held on him for that ere hact of drunkness, we bein detarmined to do hour duty." This was signed in a round-robin, "The members of the corte."

Fitzjohn showed this unique summons to Moss, who spoke to the captain, and the latter gave his permission to Gentleman Jack to attend.

When they were all seated, Fitzjohn was the first called up, and, on his entering the court, they all got up to receive him: two other witnesses were then called, one being the black boy under the servant, whom the middies had named "Quaco," and the other the marine sentinel in the cockpit. The charge against the prisoner was then read as follows:—"Whereass, Tom Bennett, you was found drunk last night in the second dog-watch, and what was worser you was himpident to one of the deligates and you are now brort to this corte to be tride for the same."

I need not inform the reader that each line-of-battle ship had two delegates, who represented their ship, and communicated their wants and wishes, at the general meeting of the congress once a day. These delegates were always two of the most respectable petty officers of the ship; and towards whom the most perfect respect was rigidly exacted.

The charges being read, the president inquired, "Now, Tom Bennett, wot sort of an excuse have you got?"—"I say," said Tom Bennett, "it's all a d— lie."

"Ay, ay," quoth the president, "lie's very easy to say, but that won't do for us! You are guilty of breaking three harticles, as the skipper would call it: first, you see, you stole some grog to make you drunk; secondly, you did get drunk, and no mistake about that; and, thirdly, wot was worserer than all, you was hinsolent to Jack Manson, our delegate; therefore you comes hunder three harticles, as I said before."

"Yes, yes, that's all rite," said Manson.

"I say as how, Tom, tell the truth and shame the devil," exhorted the boatswain's-mate.

But Tom not answering, the president said, "Come, come, I haxes you again—blow me!—the corte can't be kept all day this way!—come, why the devil don't you go for to say something?" thundering his fist down on the table as though anxious to split it.

"Vy," at length, reluctantly said Tom Bennett, "I might be a little hazy last night, but I worn't drunk, I know. How could I be? I had only two north-westerns," meaning two glasses of grog, half-water, half-spirits, "and a glass due north," meaning all spirits; for the seamen on board a ship mix their grog by the compass points. For instance, due north is raw spirit, due west is water alone: thus, although they may ask for *more northing*, they are rarely known to cry out for more westing in their spirited course. W.N.W., consequently is one-third spirits, and two-thirds water; N.W. half-and-half; N.N.W. two-thirds spirits; and then comes the *summum bonum*, due north, or spirit alone, "neat."

"Where did you get the northing, Tom?" resumed the president; "you know there's none sarved out."—"No, I knows that as well as you."

"Come, come, then no waricatin; what say you, Mr. Manson?"

"Don't mister me," says the captain of the forecastle, "I am plain Jack Manson; I won't have none of them ere titles stuck to my tail; we are all equality boys, here."

"Well, where as how, as Jack Manson says, did you run aboard of the northing?"

"Why! do you think I stole it?" says Tom.

"I don't know," replied the sergeant of marines, "it looks werry 'spicious."

"'Spicious!" quoth Tom, "your mammy's 'spicious: d—n the whole bunch of ye: I say I don't 'knowledge your powers over me, that is to say, to try me, which you carn't do, as you han't taken your jemmy davy," (affidavit,) "as our regular horcifers used to do: howsoever, if the truth must cut, I say as how I got it from Sal Suds, the vasher-voman, who brort the reefers' clothes from the wash last night, and had a bladder of gin tied up under her shimmy, and she just gid me a drop of something short in the starboard wing."

"Great neglect of duty," observed the master-at-arms. "I wote, Mr. President, that we hexamines the ship's corporal who was on duty at the gangway, and, as to Sal Suds, I know she's on board, for I cotech'd her in one of the hammocks this morning, half an hour after they'd been piped up."

"Well," says the captain of the ~~main-top~~, "I sees as

how wot I noes, but that's nort to our porpoise, just now."

After this sententious speech, Sal Suds was brought into court.

"Now, Sal," says the president, "none of your gammon, but tell the truth for once, if you can. Didn't you give Tom Bennett a drop of gin out of the bladder you brought septitiously aboard last night?"

Sal, knowing the severe punishment that awaited such infringement of the laws, replied, "Me bring spirits into the Impetus? lork bless you, no sich a thing!"

"Well, wot for an answer have you to that, Tom?"

"I noes as how she did, though," most ungallantly replied Tom; "and that last night; and wot's more, she gave me a taste."

"Oh my! what a liar you be, Tom Bennett! I gid a taste of hany likor to such an ill-looking blackguard as you! I hope old Nick will take me up in his blessed harms and run away with me, if I don't speak nothing but the truth."

"Oh! as to old Nick," said Tom, "you needn't fear him; he likes a younger voman."

This speech put poor Sal into such a rage, that she gave Tom a tremendous punch with her fist over that most sensitive region which only likes punch on the inside, and not at all on the out. Hereupon, the gravity of the court was totally discomposed, and, after a hearty laugh at Sal's rage and Tom's pain, they proceeded to call for the testimony of Gentleman Jack.

On this, Fitzjohn informed the court, that he had given Tom on the evening before a stiff glass of grog, for pipe-claying his uniform waistcoat and weekly accounts, and helping him to take a double reef in his stockings before he dined with the skipper; but that Tom had not then the least appearance of being groggy; and, at any rate, that he, Fitzjohn, was in some measure to blame, and hoped Tom would be forgiven.

"I thinks as how, Mr. President," says the master-at-arms, "that the three harticles have been fringed on and clearly proved. First, there's no manner of doubt but Tom was in the wind, if not staggering drunk: and it's pretty clear to my mind, that as how he must have stolen the

grog, for Sal swears she gave him none; the reefer swears he only gave him one glass, N.W.; therefore I wotes, that Tom Bennett has three dozen for drunkenness, three dozen for theft, two dozen for lying, and two dozen for himpidence to hour deputy,—so that's a rubbing down of ten dozen before we pipe to dinner."

"I wotes the same," says Jack Manson.

"And so does I," says the sergeant.

"And so does I," said each member but one.

"But I say," said the captain of the after-guard, who was a most notorious drunkard, "I say as how he ort to be forgiven for drinking, 'cause he stole the likor; and having done that, 'twas too natural a temptashin for any man to help getting drunk: still I say sarve it out to him well for himpidence and theft: that ort not to be forgiven."

On this difference of opinion, the votes were taken, and, as might be expected, those who held out for the larger share of punishment carried the day. Poor Tom Bennett did what he could in the way of protestation, but in vain; and ten dozen was the sentence recorded against him.

During the course of these proceedings, it may be supposed that the main-deck was crowded with seamen and marines, waiting to hear the result of the court-martial, which flew like lightning through the ship; and as Fitzjohn elbowed his way towards the cockpit, he heard them muttering, "It's a d——d deal more than our horcifers dared to have given. I don't think we shall better ourselves much by the change. I don't like that ere way at all,"—and so on.

The hands were now turned up, and Tom Bennett was just lashed to the belaying pins, ready for punishment, when the drum beat to quarters; the middies sculled up the cockpit ladder. The lower-deck guns were cast loose, and order given to double-shot them. "Run, Mr. Fitzjohn," said Manson to Gentleman Jack, "and get the keys of the magazine. Bear a hand."

As the keys of the powder-room had never been delivered to the mutineers, Fitzjohn walked leisurely into Moss's cabin, and asked for the keys, as he had been desired.

The first-lieutenant instinctively and by habit, took them down and put them into Fitzjohn's hand, and, almost at

the same instant, said, "Stop, what can the gunner want the keys of the magazine for?"

At this very moment the captain of the fore-castle and three or four of the chief mutineers ran into the ward-room, demanding the keys in a peremptory manner. Fitzjohn looked them coolly in the face, and held the keys behind his back; and, on the mutineers making an effort to seize them, he, with a sudden jerk of his arm threw them overboard through the ward-room windows, at that time open and lined with officers looking at a large-class frigate, which was passing the stern of the *Impetus* under all sail.

"It's the *St. Fiorenzo*!" exclaimed they, and correctly, for so it was.

The seamen, seeing what Fitzjohn had done, looked as though they could have torn him to pieces; however, they left the ward-room, and, as they went along the decks, there was a general cry out for powder, but none was to be had. Some of the ships, on board of which such a precaution as the above had not been taken, fired into the frigate as she passed; but her captain, Sir Harry Neale, stood coolly and calmly at the weather gangway, directing the frigate's course; and so much was he beloved by his officers and ship's company, that all the fleets in Europe would not have prevented this crew from attempting what he required.

Several of the ships seemed inclined to have followed the example of the *San Fiorenzo*, but were kept down by the more violent and stronger party.

In the hurry of clearing for action, Tom Bennett was cast loose, and for the moment forgotten. The middies advised him to get into the bum-boat, and lending him at the same time a brown grego to disguise himself, Sal Suds quickly followed him, and they both got safely and unpunished on shore. The way, however, in which Gentleman Jack had so completely prevented the mutineers of his ship from firing into the *San Fiorenzo* was neither forgotten nor forgiven. Many of the seamen, it is true, applauded greatly the daring of the act: others, though they could not but admire his courage, determined, in their own terms, to work him for it on the first opportunity, and this was not long in occurring.

CHAPTER X.

BUT few days had elapsed after the events recorded in the last chapter, when Fitzjohn one morning went up into the main-top, and hoisted his pocket handkerchief by the spare pennant-halyards, as a signal that he was "at home," to a young friend who was on board the Academy Yacht; the lad having promised to dine with him, when the yacht came out of harbour to exercise, which she did once a fortnight.

The handkerchief had not been hoisted ten minutes, when the captain of the forecastle came up into the top, and began to abuse Fitzjohn in the grossest language, upon which Gentleman Jack gave him a very sufficient blow on the chest with his clenched hand. This little compliment the seaman returned, by endeavouring to launch him over the top-rail, that he might fall on the splinter-netting, that hung above the quarter-deck. Of this Gentleman Jack by no manner of means approved; he therefore held fast by the top-rail, till two or three others coming up, clapped a timber-hitch on his body, and lowered him down on the booms.

Before, however, he could reach these, about fifty boats from the different ships of the fleet, manned and well armed, and pulling with the greatest velocity, rowed alongside and boarded the ship, they fancying that the unfortunate handkerchief had been a signal from the ship's company that the officers had overpowered them; as they always looked on the *Impetus* with an eye of jealousy, knowing full well how her captain was liked by his crew.

As each ship had sent two delégates, a court of inquiry was summoned on the forecastle, and it certainly would have gone hard with Master Gentleman Jack, had not the servant of the berth given him a tolerably good character.

"Lor, mister diligates," says he, on their proposing to indulge the youngster with a little excursion to the yard-arm, "it's no sort o' use hanging that ere pitiful 'natomy of a boy; why there now, he's so thin, he'd cut the wind into such ribbons as it whistled past him, blow me tight if ever we should get the pieces together again."

This rude joke seemed to turn the feelings of the court into a happier channel, and they finally sentenced our hero to a most unromantic voyage certainly, being nothing less than that of towing him ashore on a grating. Having arrived at this decision, they forthwith separated, to carry it into effect.

For this purpose, his thighs being well seized down on one of the gratings of the main-deck, and a smaller one lashed up perpendicularly behind, like the back of a chair, a piece of two-inch rope was passed through the fore part of the large grating, which he held like a bridle. Master Gentleman Jack, then, in this very gentlemanly situation, was lowered overboard with due caution, from the fore-yard-arm, and taken in tow by three boats.

As these passed by the different ships, the boats and raft were cheered, the only cheering part, I may remark, that poor Fitz found in the whole operation, as the water came up nearly to his middle; he soon found, however, that his life was in no danger, although the whole affair was of the most bitterly cold description. After a hard pull, that seemed to him most interminably long, he was landed at Sally Port, in due form. There he found a guard of soldiers, and, being unable to walk, four of these good fellows carried him on a kind of barrow without wheels to the Admiralty House.

At first, it was proposed to send him to the hospital; but, as he begged very hard for something to eat, that idea was abandoned. The Lords of the Admiralty, and other members of the government and privy council, had, at this time, taken entire possession of the admiral's house, and he had adjourned to that of the commissioner in the dock-yard. Such was the dreadful excitement and the apprehensions caused by the mutiny, and which extended throughout the kingdom, that guns were pointed from the battlements down Point Street, the dock-yard jetties were lined with heavy cannon, while the town and batteries were full of soldiers.

Having obtained something to eat, and a glass of spirits, Fitz set off to get his clothes changed, bending his way to the Blue Posts: but not a middy was to be seen. Despairing, therefore, of borrowing any clothes, he determined to buy a rough suit, and, as he was going down Point Street, he observed a slop-shop, with the following notice over the

door: "Tobacco and other sweetmeats sold here, also mariners' clothing of every description.

Uphaulers, downtreaders,
Flying-jib, and flesh-bag."

So that he was soon fitted out, leaving his wet things till he could send for them.

Scarcely, however, had he quitted the door, when one of the Admiralty porters, running up to him, laid hold of his arm, saying that my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty commanded his instant attendance. Poor Fitz, who was always scrupulously neat in his person, looked down at his dress, but was told they could not wait for any change of that. He set off forthwith, therefore, for the presence. Being shown into the room where sat Earl Spencer, and several of his confrères, they made him sit down, ordered in some wine for him, insisted upon his drinking off two glasses, and then heard every particular of his story. So well were they satisfied with this, that they ordered him to dine with them, and not to mind his clothes, but to come as he stood. Accordingly, he went, and, in going up to the drawing-room, soon after the ladies had withdrawn, they all crowded round him, and he had his narrative to begin, *de novo*, besides the answering of the thousand and one questions put, on as many other topics. After passing a very pleasant evening, he was appointed a kind of aid-de-camp to the magnates at the Admiralty House, in which capacity he fared very well, always breakfasting, and generally dining there. His only duty was that of going to the signal station every hour, to receive a report of the fleet, and carrying letters on service from the Admiralty House to the commissioners.

Some days after Fitz had been on shore, a part of these men's just demands was conceded, and a report obtaining ground, that the French fleet had sailed, the mutineers, to a man, offered, on the moment, to go to sea and fight the enemy: provided always that they should return to the same anchorage, until their claims were adjusted.

When the higher powers saw that this must be the result, they conceded everything; but not until the seamen had earned their own strength.

The accounts of the mutineers at Spithead and the North Sea differ in many points so materially, that it is truly very

difficult for one at the present day to arrive at what were the real facts of the case.* The general outline is known to every one: but an Englishman naturally feels an anxiety to be acquainted with the most minute details of a series of events, to which our previous history not only affords no parallel, but which are certainly of a nature incomparably of more vital interest to a nation like our own, than any other could possibly be.

In a work like the present, the most strict historical accuracy is by no means pretended. Figuring as our hero did in the memorable revolt of the Spithead fleet, some account of the proceedings of the mutineers is natural to the course of the story, and, if those whose greater experience makes them better judges of the matter than the writer, should perceive any errors in the following rough statement of that day's events, they must remember that the novelist is to the reader of history but as the pilot-fish to the shark; a sort of literary avant courier, who points out to the voracious devourer of ponderous tomes, and black letter quartos, where good and desirable prey may be found. The sources of my information are derived from one serving in the fleet at the time, and it is only where his memory has proved treacherous, that my narrative can be at all incorrect. I know not why it should be so, yet I have observed the fact, that all those writers who have—by their own showing—entered into the field of naval history, have with wonderful tenderness avoided this ground. Mr. James, *et stellæ minores*, all seem to behold in it a burning bush. My vision is, however, I confess, not so sensitive. If history be written for any purpose, I should suppose it is for that of recording the truth of what has gone before, to those who may come after us. But if for any other end it be compiled; if the writer is to gloss over the deeds of some with flattery, to visit the actions of others with unmerited severity, entirely to suppress facts in this quarter, or to exaggerate them still more in that, the production becomes one of the vilest of party efforts, and the author more contemptible than his works. Such a dabbler in history I have in my mind's eye, and on reading this, he may recognise his own portrait.

* Since writing the above, a very minute history of the mutinies, both at Spithead and the Nore, has been published in the "Family Library."

Than such a shuffling course as the above, the humbler path of fiction may well hold itself more honest ; since, if in this we do not meet with the truth, we must remember we were never led to expect it ; while, on the contrary, if we do, we are bound to accredit our writer with having more than fulfilled his pledges.

Amidst the mist which, as I have said before, hangs round the numerous narratives of the mutiny at Spithead, one point at least stands out in prominent relief, that for some years previously to the grand outbreak, the suffering seamen of our fleets had sent in to the higher powers numerous petitions, praying for an inquiry into, and a redress of, the many grievances that weighed so heavily upon them. From the terror inspired by a mal-administration of the naval discipline, these petitions were not signed in the regular manner, but in the form of a round-robin, or in a circle, which took away, as they fancied, the onus of any one signing first. From this error in point of form, that of the most studied neglect was the only reception which they met with. The burden of these prayers and petitions was to this effect—that the seamen and their brothers, the marines of his Majesty's fleet, begged leave most humbly to lay before their lordships at the Admiralty, what they considered their just grievances. They were forced from their homes, and impressed into the king's ships by violence ; taken from the merchant service, where they could have their recreations on shore and double wages, which enabled them to send some support to their families, or leave part to be received by their wives from the shipowners during their absence.

In this, the merchant service, moreover, when they were at sea, they had plenty of good wholesome provisions to eat. Whereas, in the king's ships, when they went on foreign service, which in the East Indies lasted five years, and in the West Indies three years, no sooner had the ship finished her time of service, than she returned to Europe, bringing only the officers, while all the ship's company who had any health, were, under pain of death in case of resistance, drafted into other ships, and after that into other ships again, until the seamen were worn out, many of them having had as much as seventeen years' pay due to them, without ever having enjoyed permission to visit their wives and children. who were as dear to British

seamen as to those who live on shore. Moreover, whilst they were at sea, the purser, to increase his emoluments, was obliged to cut down their provisions, so that they had not enough to satisfy hunger; and, on their return to harbour, they were never allowed the indulgence of leave, or the sight of their families, except the latter came on board, where they were obliged to mix with the worst and most depraved of women. Even when, however, their hard-earned wages were paid, these, they said, were only received when the ships were about to proceed to sea, so that they were thus deprived of spending in any reasonable way that money which had been gained by so many years of hard toil, and the sacrifice of liberty, health, and blood. Besides all the above grievances, they represented that they were very often most cruelly punished by having young and inexperienced officers put over them, into whose conduct no just and adequate inquiry was ever made.

The seamen, and their brothers the marines, of the fleet, begged to assure their lordships that they were loyal to their good king, and like true Britons ready to die for their country, but they hoped their lordships would cause an inquiry to be made into this the true statement of their great grievances, and allow some of their shipmates to attend at the same time, to explain what they knew to be just and true, and what none else could explain for them. To the various petitions running to this effect, was affixed the name of each ship in the fleet, in a form which I have before denominated a round-robin.

The names of the ships so signed, were, as nearly as can be quoted from memory, the following, with a few others. Queen Charlotte, Culloden, Colossus, Dreadnought, Defiance, Blenheim, Gibraltar, Sans Pareil, Royal George, Implacable, Russell, Prince of Wales, St. George, Orion, Victory, Royal William, Prince George, Grampus, Excellent, Bellerophon, Le Juste, L'Impetueux, Audacious, Romney, Polyphemus.

When, at length, these prayers did reach the Admiralty, the answer from the secretary was as usual: That he had received and laid before their lordships the petitions of the ships' companies named in the margin, but their lordships could not receive any petition unless transmitted through the commander-in-chief.

The fact is, the seamen never felt that their petition would be transmitted by the commander-in-chief, since this had never been the case, after repeated trials, by sending copies of the same petition. At length, one did attain the desired end, through Black Jack, as they used to call Lord Howe, and to whom they were much attached, from his gallant conduct in leading them into battle on the glorious days of the 29th and 30th of May, 1794, and finishing the work by the decisive battle of the 1st of June. On the conduct of Lord Howe, many different opinions prevail. Much blame had been thrown on his lordship for having, during his command of the channel fleet, resolutely turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of his men. Others, on the contrary, and with just grounds, maintain that his heart was entirely theirs. Finally, however, it was at that time believed that his lordship very properly, and like a true sailor's friend, went immediately to the Admiralty, and pointed out that the requests made by the seamen ought to meet with attention, and their grievances to receive inquiry; reminding my lords, that if the men once got by threats what they were entitled to in justice, they would know another time how to get their "grievances," whether *real* or *imaginary*, redressed by the same means. But such was the spirit at that time ascendant in the cabinet, that, it has been boldly asserted, Lord Howe received a very severe rebuke, and even, it was said, a threat of removal from the list of the naval service.

The British navy, no longer entertaining any hopes that they should gain, by mild means alone, that just redress they sought at the hands of those very countrymen for whose luxury and enjoyment they themselves had been impressed, and their comrades slaughtered, now resolved on stronger measures, and sent in a remonstrance to the following effect. One copy of it they sent to the Admiralty, one to the commander-in-chief at Portsmouth, and a third to Sir John Colpoys, who commanded the Channel fleet.

"The ships' companies of the undersigned ships, including their brothers the marines, having in vain petitioned their lordships for a hearing, that they might have their real grievances inquired into and righted,—and having no hopes of any satisfactory answer, have determined not to lift an anchor till they are redressed. The ships' companies, which they

seek to have granted to them are as follows:—Increase of pay, to make it two-thirds of the sum received in the merchant service. Provisions at full weight, instead of only ten ounces to the pound. No provisions to be served out which have been more than five years in salt, or in store. No flour to be served out in any harbour under the British flag, but a good supply of vegetables to be granted whenever they can be obtained. Leave to go on shore, at the rate of one man in three, *after* the ship has been refitted for *sea*—the other two men of the three becoming responsible for the return of the third. This leave to be granted only every twelvemonth, and then for not more than forty-eight hours at a time. Part of their pay to be paid to their wives and families during their absence. The state of the sick to be looked into, and better cared for, and those wounded in action to receive pay until cured. No captain to be allowed to give more than six dozen lashes, unless by sentence of a court-martial; no man to be flogged until twenty-four hours after he has committed the fault; and no man to be kept in irons more than a week. A free and full pardon for what has passed up to this day. From which time no further grievances should be received.”

This was signed by twenty-eight sail of the line, nine frigates, and seventeen brigs and cutters, in a round-robin as before described.

Each ship elected two delegates; and, when the petition was ready, they came on board and touched the name of their respective ships, and swore to die rather than not obtain what they required.

I have already alluded to the old system of the purser's emoluments. In former days, this officer was paid sixty pounds a-year, as his personal pay, for a ship of the line, and it was universally allowed that he made, as clear profit, one pound a-year per man by savings,—that is, cheating the ill-fed seaman out of his proper weights and rations, so that the Navy Board allowed to the purser half the *contract* price of the provisions thus saved, which brought that respectable class of officers, most unjustly, into contempt and dislike with the seamen, and yet almost without any just blame to the purser himself, since he was acting in strict conformity with the rules and regulations of the service, sanctioned by his superiors.

A piece of beef, as it is called, which was by contract to weigh *seven pounds*, when cut from the bullock, fresh, was first by the contractors reduced, by false weight, to six pounds, then kept in salt, always seven, but more frequently eleven years. This reduced it to four pounds and a half, which half, the purser cribbed as a matter of course. The beef being now pretty well deprived of its nutritious qualities, was *two days'* allowance of *meat* for seven hardy seamen; and the government fancied, and it would appear on paper, that it was *seven pounds* of beef, since as such they had paid for it. In this account, be it remembered, we have scorned to take in as loss, the many pieces of horse-flesh which were constantly found in the beef-casks.

To proceed:—The Admiralty returned an answer to this latter remonstrance with a dignity most truly becoming to the British empire, the fate of which had for years depended upon its fleets. It was to the effect that—The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had received the mutinous memorial addressed to them by the ships' companies named in the margin, and transmitted by the commander-in-chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels lying at Spithead, and had only to reply that their request could not be complied with.

The brave and gallant Sir John Colpoys was made the channel through which this cruel answer was communicated to them; this he did with a coolness and judgment for which he was most conspicuous; but had it not been for the courage of his brave officers,—and particularly of his flag-lieutenant, now Captain F. Beauman, who declared that it was only through his body that they should reach the admiral,—Sir John Colpoys would, in all probability, have forfeited his life at the yard-yarm, in the execution of his duty.

The next morning, the signal was made for the fleet to unmoor, as if to try the staunchness of the ships' companies; but not one man, throughout them all, would touch a capstan-bar.

As soon as this was known in London, the funds fell to $45\frac{1}{2}$; the Admiralty became alarmed, and held their board at Portsmouth; and "Black Jack," (Lord Howe,) was sent for, to become the channel of communication with the mutineers.

On his arrival at Portsmouth, the delegates were invited,

by his lordship, to come on shore to a conference, which invitation they accepted, leaving orders on board each ship, that if they were not allowed to return again by sunset, to hang every officer in the fleet.

On approaching the landing-place at Portsmouth, the delegates observed a large body of soldiers drawn up, and hesitated at landing. Lord Howe, having been informed of this, proceeded immediately to Sally Port, and said, "My lads, since you hesitate in trusting yourselves on shore, I do not hesitate in entrusting myself to the honour and care of British seamen!"—and he immediately stepped into the largest barge, which the delegates manned from amongst themselves.

Lord Howe then desired to be rowed to the flag-ship of Sir John Colpoys, and, requesting that every one might be withdrawn from the quarter-deck of the ship except himself and the delegates, he pointed out to them the necessity for their returning to their allegiance; and, as the French fleet were now at sea, requested them to consider to what danger the commerce of the country was exposed. Finally, he added, that if they would proceed to sea, their claims should, during their absence, be taken into consideration, and, on their return, be satisfactorily adjusted.

To this the delegates replied, that if Lord Howe would pledge his honour that he believed the French fleet to be at sea, and he himself would take the command of them, they would sail immediately: provided always, that as soon as they had drubbed Jean Crapeau well, he would promise to return to port, and become their advocate.

At this moment, when everything appeared, *en train*, it was said, that the cabinet would not intrust the command of the fleet to Earl Howe, but wanted to force the men to sea under the command of Sir John Colpoys, whom they themselves had rendered so odious to the British fleet. If so, what folly and strange infatuation could have induced them thus to decide, it is impossible now to say. Ultimately, another admiral was appointed to the command, and the fleet sailed under Lord Bridport.

When off Brest, they found that the story respecting the French fleet was false; and, had it not been for the forbearance and kind conduct of his lordship, the British fleet might have sailed into the harbour of Brest.

On their return to Spithead, the promises of Lord Howe were realised. The pay of the men was increased; their rations were granted in full, and occasional leave to go on shore. But no notice was taken of the two grand points—punishment, and the allotment of a portion of their pay. This last was granted some years afterwards, by the perseverance of Sir Sidney Smith with Mr. Pitt, who acceded to it on Sir Sidney's pointing out a plan for its being done, without any additional expense to the nation. And the king afterwards procured the mitigation of punishment, by the general order, that no man shall have more than a certain number of lashes, except by sentence of a court-martial.

There are many who will imagine the honour of the sea-service to demand, that the memorable events of these years should now be buried for ever in oblivion. Those who can entertain such an opinion are, indeed, most mistaken;—for what have we paid the dear and blood-bought price of experience, if not to reap the advantages, that render even its costliness a gain?

On every English statesman, the mutiny of the British navy should make the very deepest impression. On the grand broad principles of government it shows that, even the most meek and useful vassal may, by a continuance of wrong and oppression, be converted into the most terrific enemy.

In its own especial case, it should remind us, that the salvation of this empire has been again and again received at the hands of her seamen. It should, therefore, be our pride, as it most surely is our duty, to stifle all dissatisfaction by an anticipation of their wants, and an unsolicited watching over the comforts of those brave men, who have been dragged from their homes for our emergencies, and are sacrificing, for our happiness and security, all that the human heart can recognise as most dear.

Captain Pleasant's ill-health continuing, he would have resigned his command, but his high and honourable feeling made him determine to die at his post, rather than give it up at this momentous crisis. An act of amnesty being passed, the ships were completed in their victualling and sea stores, and the fleet put to sea.

The only event of any consequence which occurred on

board the *Impetus*, to interrupt the monotony of the cruise, happened a few weeks after she had gone to sea.

One of the signal-men, in his great anxiety to keep the signal-halyards clear, whilst the gaff was being lowered down to relieve the mizenmast, in the gale then blowing, slipped, most unfortunately, from the taffrail, and fell overboard.

Being a very bad swimmer, there seemed little chance of saving him. The quarter-boat was ordered to be cleared away, but the sea running very high, the first-lieutenant prudently ran into the cabin, to ask the captain's authority before he would put in jeopardy the lives of seven men, for the almost hopeless chance of saving one: before he could return to the quarter-deck, the boat was in the water. Such is the enthusiasm of British seamen in trying to save the life of a drowning shipmate.

On occasions like the present, few captains like to take upon themselves the painful duty of refusing their sanction; but the Admiralty should relieve them from such a disagreeable responsibility, by a positive order in the naval instructions, to the effect, that when the weather rendered the operation doubtful, the captain had their lordships' authority not to risk it.

To proceed,—the cutter being in the water, Joe Browne, the mate of the watch, slid down the tackles from the davit's-end into the boat, and, as soon as the latter got clear of the transom, which she did with great difficulty, from the deep rolling of the *Impetus*, a curling sea broke into her, before the oars had given her sufficient way to keep her head to the sea, and this quickly spilling her, she turned bottom up.

Fitz' poor old friend, Joe Browne, and four seamen, being entangled among the thwarts, were drowned: the other three contrived to climb upon the boat's keel. The attention of every one was naturally called to this greater misfortune; and as for the unhappy signal-man, the little circle of his death-struggles was only pointed out by the gulls which already hovered over him.

The ship now drifted fast to leeward, and the evening closing in with a sleety mist, created great uneasiness for the fate of the three survivors. Fortunately, the captain's barge had, at his own expense, been fitted up to make her

more buoyant than the unmeaning and nearly useless boat of that name, formerly supplied from the dock-yard. This, then, was immediately hoisted out, and, with the greatest difficulty, succeeded in reaching the capsized cutter, and rescuing the already nearly lifeless remains of the cutter's crew.

This sad accident threw a complete gloom over the ship's company for some days; but, in a man-of-war, more especially a line-of-battle ship, one event so rapidly succeeds another, that nothing save a general action occupies the attention longer. The latter, on the contrary, is talked of so often and so long, that it becomes a bore of great magnitude, the mention of which is at length rendered finable by a heavy mulct.

This cruise having lasted two months, the fleet returned to Spithead, and Captain Pleasant, finding his ill-health increase, was obliged to relinquish his command, universally regretted and beloved. A day or two before his quitting the ship, Gentleman Jack sent his compliments and begged to speak to him.

"Well, youngster," said the captain, who was reclining languidly, and seemingly in pain, on a sofa, "what have you to say?"—"I have taken the liberty to intrude on you, sir, to ask the benefit of your advice."

"And to take the pleasure of following your own, I suppose."—"No, indeed, sir, I hope not. I am sure I have always hitherto found yours to be so much the better of the two, that there is little chance of my so treating it."

"Well, then, come here, boy, and sit down beside me, and let me know at once what new trouble it is you are making for yourself"—seemingly pleased with the little compliment Fitz had paid to his kindness, and pointing to a seat on the sofa beside him. Having accepted the post of honour thus offered, Fitzjohn said, "The point on which I wish to have the benefit of your advice, Captain Pleasant, is, whether, as we are so soon to lose the pleasure of having you for our commander, it would not be better for me to look out for a ship on the West-India station, and if so, whether you, sir, could be kind enough to procure me a vacancy, as it might lead to my promotion."

"As to your promotion, Master Gentleman Jack," replied Pleasant, in a sarcastic tone, "I do not really think

you need burden your mind with that, until, at any rate, you have served your time, and perhaps, I may add, passed your examination. Then, when these little points have been attended to, it certainly strikes me that, situated as you are, a cruise or two in Bond Street is a devilish deal more likely to get you your promotion than going to the West Indies. That sort of thing may do very well for the sons of planters and overseers, or people with half-caste blood in them, and therefore you see it would be highly indelicate for gentlemen to interfere with their prospects. No, no, stay in this ship, and then in all probability you'll go to the Mediterranean, which is the only good station, after all. By this advice, however, I do not mean you to understand, that I advise any youngster to remain too long with one commanding officer. A twelvemonth is quite sufficient to be under one captain. By this means, you learn much more, in seeing the various ways in which the same duty can be carried on. There,—I cannot talk to you any more at present, so good morning; depend on it, whoever may succeed me, I will not forget to mention you to him."

CHAPTER XI.

As the time for Captain Pleasant's departure drew near, his officers were, of course, all anxiety to know who would be their captain, and, as Gentleman Jack had been advised to remain in the ship until his rated midddy's time was served, he determined to stay, come who would.

At last, they heard that Captain Jedwards was appointed to the *Impetus*; but as no one could recollect hearing his name during the war, it was concluded that he only went afloat to become entitled to his flag. This proved afterwards to be the case. As Fitz went with the first-lieutenant to bring him on board for the first time, he could not help contemplating his mild, placid countenance, and very soon discovered that many years must have passed since Jedwards had been to sea; this fact the ship's company soon found out also, and the *Impetus* became a perfect privateer.

Nothing would induce her new and worthy, though mis-

taken captain to inflict more than six lashes, so that when Moss threatened them with the gangway, they used to call it being tickled. Within a very short period of this great change in the command of the *Impetus*, Moss, the first-lieutenant, was promoted to the rank of commander, and appointed to an inactive fire-ship stationed at one of our ports; and, within a few weeks' date, Jedwards was removed into the *George*, and Captain Bellow took the command of the *Impetus*.

On the first day of his arrival, he routed seventeen of the mids out of the ship, discharging them into the guard-ship, until they could find, in the best way they might, captains who would receive them. Seeing this going on around him, Gentleman Jack prepared himself for his turn; it was, however, intimated to him, that he, as a very great favour, might remain, but could not be rated above A.B.

Fitz, with his usual sense, requested time to consider the matter, in order that he might consult his friends: he then wrote off forthwith to his mother, but, before Fitz could get an answer, he had had enough of Captain Bellow. In that brief interval, he heard such cursing and swearing at his officers on the quarter-deck, and indeed everything was so different from his early friend, Jack Pleasant, that he resolved to make sail; and not without a good excuse.

A slight wound he had received in boarding a *chasse-marée* on the coast of France, had for some weeks shown anything but a disposition to heal. He persuaded the surgeon, therefore, to recommend his being sent to the Haslar Hospital, as by the time the *George* was refitted, he would most probably be recovered, since Captain Jedwards had kindly offered him a rating as middy, if our hero chose to follow him.

When Captain Bellow had first been named for the *Impetus*, his rapidly-rising reputation for skill and bravery had much inclined Fitz to remain with him: but the highest qualities of the sailor or the soldier are little worth, if their possessor is wanting in the first great characteristics of a gentleman. When, therefore, he got back under the command of Jedwards, he was better able to prize his good qualities, and allow for his foibles.

Pipes having objected to quit the *Impetus*, was subsequently, to the great regret of Fitzjohn, tried by a court-

martial for drunkenness, and dismissed the service. Fitz remained at the hospital three weeks, and there he received the greatest kindness and attention, not only from the worthy and excellent governor, Captain Yeo, the father of the gallant and well-known Sir James, but from the officers in general.

There is a system of management in our naval hospitals which reflects the greatest credit on the British government. No expense is spared for the seamen's comfort, and such is the unanimous feeling of the patients when they are discharged. This, with regard to our hero, happened on the same day that a Scotch midshipman was also sent out. The two lads had become acquainted in the hospital, being in the same ward, and they were now sent on board the Billy, the flag-ship.

Having heard a great deal about the thievish propensities of the crew, they laid their heads together, as to how they should guard their traps, more particularly their bedding. They intended at first to have kept watch and watch, but the luxuries of the hospital had made them unfit for such duty; and these youngsters had two berths assigned them in which to hang up their hammocks in the supernumerary tier.

The great object of theft at that time was presented by the blankets. Fitz made a knot in the corner of his upper blanket, and clenched his hand fast in it; but Sawney, thinking to be still more sure, cut a hole athwart-ships in his, and put his head through it. They then hung their keys round their necks, like ladies' locketts, and, thinking themselves quite safe, soon fell asleep. As their hammocks touched each other, they entered into a treaty offensive and defensive, to assist each other in case of an attack.

They had not slept long, when Fitz was suddenly awoken by Sawney's calling out, "Od! dom thee, man, ye'll no get my claiths,—ye'll no get my claiths, I tell ye," and immediately afterwards a loud bump on the cables gave evidence of the fate of Scotia's son, whose head had held so pertinaciously fast in the hole of his blanket, that he had been dragged out and nearly choked. Fitz turned out immediately to assist his ally, who he feared must be much hurt, and, as soon as he had guided his hand to the clew of his own hammock, he went round to the side of Sawney's. In

so doing, he thought he distinguished something whisk past his legs, and in the next moment discovered that the whole of his upper coverings, sheet, blanket, and counterpane, had disappeared.

Heartily did they both wish themselves back in the hospital; but they had nothing except that frequent resource, to grin and bear it. It is impossible to imagine what were the miseries of being drafted a supernumerary into a guard-ship in those days. No one pitied you, or invited you to his table, or took the least notice of you.

The next day being what was called "passing day" on board the Billy, Fitz proposed to Sawney that one of them should go ashore to buy some eatables, and, as Fitz was anxious to hear the mode of examination, to which he himself knew he must come, Sawney very kindly undertook the task of caterer.

At ten o'clock the court was opened, but instead of finding some of the captains of the fleet to examine the candidates, there were three old passed midshipmen; the president, the famous Billy Tulmer, sat in the middle. He had always through life declared he preferred being the oldest mid to the youngest lieutenant, and there was little doubt of his wishes being gratified.

His seat was elevated by two quadrant-cases, and over a half-dirty white night-cap, he wore a dingy-looking cocked hat, squared by the lifts and braces. On his shoulders hung a rusty blue camlet cloak, lined in the collar with red serge, and by the side of his right hand, on the table, laid what he called his "*matie*," being a short knotty thick blackthorn that was used in fight with the dockyard-men.

Around this worthy president's neck was suspended a light blue ribbon, and pendant from its centre hung a most indescribable ornament which Fitz immediately took to be the grand badge of his order. The secretary that faced him, besides the usual attributes of his occupation, had a cobbing-board laid before him, being, like the speaker's mace, a proof that the court had met and were on duty.

As Gentleman Jack had often heard of this passing for blackguards, he was delighted to have this unintentional opportunity of witnessing, in all his glory, one who might be held his own antithesis. When a candidate presented himself for examination, the usual inquiry of what were

The ships in which he had served, and the character of the different officers, and many other matters therewith connected were first gone into.

But, as for the questions and answers, such, it may be inferred, was the nameless dignity of this tribunal, that I am well assured no man would ever be forgiven for publishing either the questions it put, or the answers it received: suffice it to say, that three out of five candidates were plucked, and recommended to cruise at the back of the Point at Portsmouth for three months. One unhappy aspirant they absolutely refused to examine, because, on his presenting his certificates of time, they recognised in his last captain a known psalm-singer. To this, he replied, "I do beg that you'll hear me, gentlemen; for though it's very true that on deck they sing psalms, yet I assure you, on my honour, that below there are no better hands at a blackguarding match in the service."

President Tulmer, on this, proposed he should be examined, to which the others reluctantly assented; and to such perfection did he pass, that they decorated him with the insignia that hung before Billy, and insisted on his taking a seat at the board.

At the expiration of three days, Fitzjohn joined his own ship, the *George*. Captain Jedwards received him with the greatest kindness, and introduced him, at his lodgings on Common Hard, to his amiable young wife, who was about one third his own age, and to the rest of his family. As they had an entire new set of officers and middies, excepting three from the *Impetus*, it was quite another world to our *Columbus*, who was forthwith appointed signal-midshipman, and, by good luck, aide-de-camp to the captain in the fighting department.

He now very soon discovered the superior comfort of a three-decked ship over that of two; and so did the captain, —for, as he had decided upon taking his wife and children to sea with him, the upper cabin was made into a nursery, and the *George* joined the channel-fleet under Lord St. V——t.

On arriving off Brest, Jedwards went on board the flagship, to pay his respects to the commander-in-chief, and Gentleman Jack, as aide-de-camp, accompanied him in the barge. Whilst returning on board, the latter soon per-

ceived that something had gone wrong. Jedwards was fretful and peevish, his face red, and when he got on the quarter-deck, he made some disagreeable remarks about the ropes not being taut, the topsail-sheets not close home, &c., &c., which on board a ship are generally held to be the invariable signs that the skipper's in a pet.

About ten o'clock on the next forenoon, the signal was flying on board the flag-ship with the George's distinguishing pennant—"Signal made not understood." Fitz being the signal-mid, of course reported it to the officer of the watch, and he to the captain: out came the worthy Jedwards, and demanded of Fitzjohn, in a very quick and unusual tone, "What signal, sir, have you presumed to make without my orders?"

In vain did Fitz protest he had made none—the different officers on deck looked carefully at all the mast heads: no signal was flying. Fitz was ordered, however, to hoist the answering pennant, which he did, and the commander-in-chief hauled down his bunting. In a minute, however, the same signal was re-hoisted—"Signal made not understood." This was repeated several times: at last, the signal was made for the signal-officer to repair on board the flag.

Master Gentleman Jack, with a quaking heart, now descended to dress, and was ready as soon as the jolly-boat.

Having taken his best spy-glass in his hand, or rather slung it over his shoulder, he mounted to the entering port of the flag-ship in a terrible funk, and was immediately ordered on the quarter-deck. There stood the much-dreaded commander-in-chief, in full tog, with his cocked-hat on, the captain of the fleet, and all the numerous suite attendant on so distinguished a command.

"Are you signal-officer of the George?" was the first question, in the earl's rough voice. "Yes, sir."

"Pray, sir, what signal is that you have had flying these two hours?" Fitz declared that no signal whatever had been made during the whole of the morning, as he had been on deck since daybreak, excepting for half an hour at breakfast.

"Indeed! what have you got in that leather case, sir?"—"My spying-glass, sir, which my mother bought for me when I first came to sea."

"Please, sir, to take it out."

Now, as this said glass was one of those plated telescopes which were not common in those days, the earl no sooner beheld it, than he said, "Holloa! here's a Sunday glass! why, you must be the fellow they call Gentleman Jack. What's your name?"—"Fitzjohn, sir."

"I thought as much: then it was you who quitted the Impetus because Captain Bellow happened to swear at you once on the quarter-deck."—"Not so, my lord," replied Fitz, "but lest he should happen to swear at me again."

"Oh! a very nice distinction, truly. Then I suppose you don't approve of swearing."—"Decidedly not, my lord."

"Do you know, sir, that I am rather given to swearing occasionally myself."—"I never could have believed the report, had not your lordship now confirmed it."

"And pray, sir, what do you think of it in me?" Here the earl either felt or affected so much anger, that Fitz began to think himself in a very awkward situation. He therefore cast his eyes round the horizon to reflect a moment, and then said, "Why, my lord, when I reflect on your past history, I suppose your reason for swearing is to convince the world there is yet another victory which you can achieve."

"What's that sir?"—"The great victory, my lord, of conquering a bad habit."

The earl looked at his flag-captain, and smiled: then turning to Fitzjohn, "Upon my word, Mr. Gentleman Jack, if you are only half as bold in the face of the enemy as you are in presence of your commander-in-chief, you'll make what I call a d——d fine fellow. But come, sir, it's my turn to lecture you—follow me!"

His lordship then, with that stately air which he so often assumed, marched up to the poop, and took Fitz over to the lee side.

"Now, sir," said he, "what flags do you call those over the weather quarter-gallery?"

Following the earl's direction, Fitz put his glass to his eye, when, what should he behold, but three children's napkins, which the nursery-maid had hung out to dry. In vain did he disclaim their being in his department, as he had nothing to do with "baby bunting," but bunting

alone; and, after telling him that a signal-officer's eye should be everywhere around his own ship, his lordship questioned our hero about the inhabitants of the upper cabin.

This, then, it appeared was the first time he was made aware that Jedwards had any one on board excepting his wife.

CHAPTER XII.

NOTWITHSTANDING that Jedwards learned, on the return of Fitzjohn from the flag-ship, what had there passed, he seemed determined to take the matter with that coolness which so distinctly marked his character: not allowing it in any way to disturb the appropriation he had made of his upper cabin for his maid-servants and nursery, and to all appearance quite content that he had reserved the admiral's cabin beneath, for himself and wife.

The middies, therefore, imitating his example, thought they would take it coolly too: and so were not long in making an acquaintance with the damsels of the higher region, there being no very great distance from the taffrail to the upper stern-gallery.

"Good morning!" and "How d'ye do?" from a pair of uplifted sparkling blue eyes on a cruise, when the blessing of a petticoat's society can only be appreciated by your "true British sailor"—this, I say, rapidly produced a more intimate acquaintance.

As soon as the lights had disappeared from Jedwards' middle-deck cabin, at night, the mids used to descend in couples over the taffrail, by the large stern lanthorn, which all three-deck ships carry in their places, in case an admiral should hoist his flag on board. Having, by this means, entered the poop-cabin, they used to pass the first watch with the nursery maids, always leaving a look-out to give notice of the approach of any one by the entrance from the quarter-deck.

This ingenious mode of extending the circle of their acquaintance was first proposed by Master Gentleman Jack, who said, that after his adventure of the napkins with the commander-in-chief, he considered it his duty to

the service, to have the nursery department immediately under himself. He preferred making his inspections in the evening, he said, because mankind were so given to scandal, that morning visits might be observed: and, furthermore, he added, that he knew the value of character too well himself, to expose to the breath of calumny two ladies so deserving of his consideration as the fair young nursery-maids of so distinguished and gallant an officer as Captain Jedwards.

About seven bells, one first watch, whilst Fitzjohn and another mid of the name of Clark were thus endeavouring to *passer le temps* in the after-cabin, they heard a door open in the fore-cabin, and intervening between them and the quarter-deck; as, however, they had taken the precaution of bolting the door communicating between the two, they had thus time to scud through the upper quarter-gallery window, over the taffrail, and on to the poop, before the nursery-maid, who pretended to be fast asleep, would open the door to the intruder, who proved to be no less a person than Jedwards himself.

After searching the upper-cabin thoroughly, and discovering no one, Jedwards came on the quarter-deck, and found Fitzjohn walking there; but, unfortunately, with only one shoe, having either left the other in the nursery, or lost it overboard, in scrambling up and outside the quarter.

Now the distinguished Captain Jedwards had, in his hurry, put his cocked hat athwart-ships over his white night-cap, and, with his yellow flannel dressing-gown on, and a drawn sword in his hand, he suddenly flared forth from out of the upper cabin door, to the astonishment and dismay of all present, the two culprits excepted.

"Where's the officer of the watch?" demanded the night-walker; but as the said watcher was always a kind friend to Fitzjohn, the latter was determined, in this case, as in many that had preceded it, to screen his friend from the impending storm.

"Where's the officer of the watch?" repeated Jedwards, growing furious; but, as the worthy official for whom he inquired was at that very moment lying drunk and asleep in the fore part of the hammock-cloths, it may well be supposed that "the officer of the watch" gave no answer to the "post captain."

Jedwards, looking about him in the dark, at length perceived Gentleman Jack walking the lee side of the quarter-deck, and called to him. As soon as Fitz had approached him sufficiently near to be heard, he was obliged to stand upon one leg, like a chick at roost, keeping the other foot up under his trowser-leg, to prevent the white stocking being seen.

"Where's the officer in charge of the watch, Mr. Fitzjohn?" thundered the skipper.—"He has just stepped below, sir. Shall I go and call him?"

"No, no," said Jedwards, "give him a few minutes, and I have no doubt he will be back."

After waiting some time, no officer appeared, and Jedwards inquired for what purpose he had left the deck.

"I believe he's gone to look at the chart, sir," replied the veritable Fitz; for this was always laid open on the ward-room table.

Eight bells (midnight) striking, Jedwards despatched Fitzjohn to desire the officer to return on deck. Down dived Fitz, and calling the lieutenant who had the middle watch, and was to relieve him of the drunken watch, begged the former to come up immediately, as the captain was on deck, and he feared the latter might be discovered.

Fitz then took this opportunity of borrowing a shoe from the quartermaster who went down to rouse up the middies who had to come on deck; but the shoe being much too large, it was with the greatest difficulty that he could slide and slip it along the main-deck to the gangway ladder, up which he intended to mount and call the sleeping lieutenant, as soon as the captain walked aft.

Those who have been on board a man-of-war will readily admit that the striking of eight bells, designating the end of the watch, whether they are struck more or less forcibly, is naturally, to the ear of the watcher, much louder than all the rest put together: and the most sleepy midddy naturally awakes from under the lee of the weather bulwark, where he has coiled himself down on the breeching of the gun, quite confident that he, like the immortal Nelson, has "done his duty." So it was with the drunken lieutenant, the sleepy and still half-fuddled officer of the first watch.

The sound had scarcely got out of the bell, when Paddy

O'Reilly, for that was his name, instinctively aroused from his sleep, and poked his hatless head from under the hammock-cloths. Now it so happened, at this moment, that Jedwards had only taken a half turn on the quarter-deck, that he might meet the officer of the watch coming up the after-hatchway, and had consequently, at this critical period, approached the fore part of the quarter-deck nettings, just in the same dress as that in which I have described him coming out of the cabin door.

Suddenly pausing in his cool walk, Jedwards looked at the uplifting and moving hammock-cloths—Paddy, rubbing his eyes, stared at the man in white. Fitzjohn, upon the main-deck ladder, just high enough to look over the quarter-deck, was an unobserved spectator of the whole, and shook in his odd shoes for the consequences.

"Who the devil are you?" says Paddy O'Reilly, "some d—d ghost, I suppose."—"Is that Mr. O'Reilly, the officer of the watch?" returned Jedwards. "I understood you were below, looking over the chart."

"What the devil is it to me what you understood? By the holy saint, if you don't go back to h—, where you no doubt come from, I'll soon make an eyelet-hole in your carcass. Paddy O'Reilly was never afraid of a ghost, yet; but keep off now, keep off—I know who you are: you're Bill Whistle, the boatswain, who cut his throat last year to save being broke for falsely expending, in your store-book, the spare anchor; so none of your gammon, but slip your cable, and be off, or I'll run a handspike into your burning throat, I will. Here, quartermaster, bring me a can of water from the scuttle butt, I spit sixpences."

They say at sea that some kind destiny always guards the drunken from the evils into which they run. If so, never was it more truly exemplified; for, at this moment, when nothing else could have interfered, the admiral made the signal for the fleet to wear in succession. As the neglect or delay of this order might have caused some of the line to be running aboard of us, its execution was imperative; the middle watch lieutenant, therefore, took charge of the deck, and the inquiry into O'Reilly's case was deferred until the next morning.

Jedwards, although one of the most kind and best-tempered officers in the navy, was, if we except his fear of cor-

poral punishment, a man determined to have the duty of the ship properly conducted, and a lieutenant being found drunk and asleep in his watch, is, comparatively with the discipline in the navy, on a par with treason on shore. By the articles of war, the mere fact of being asleep is punished with death. There remained but little doubt in Fitzjohn's mind, therefore, but that his most excellent friend, Paddy O'Reilly, would be tried and broke by sentence of a court-martial; and it was painful to him to reflect that he should, of necessity, become one of the principal witnesses against him.

In the forenoon of the following day, Paddy and Fitzjohn were summoned into the captain's cabin. Gentleman Jack felt this was no joke; but, still, he could not help smiling, when Jedwards began by thus addressing Paddy:—"Well, Mr. O'Reilly, what were you doing in the first watch, last night?"—"Why, then, by my sowl, I don't rightly know, Captain Jedwards," said he.

"But I do," says Jedwards; "you got over the taffrail, into my maid-servant's apartment. You Irishmen can't be quiet when there's a woman in the ship."—"What, is it me you mane, Captain Jedwards?" said Paddy, with the most virtuous surprise; "I'll swear, by all that's good and gracious, that I wasn't within a yard of your maids, Captain Jedwards."

"Indeed, sir, but then I say you were: you first of all trespassed upon my premises, and then when you heard me coming, you ran away, and hid yourself in the hammock-cloths, and then told this youngster," pointing to Fitzjohn, "that if I asked for you, to say that you were down below, looking at the chart; don't deny it, Mr. O'Reilly, I have proof positive of it."—"By all the powers, Captain Jedwards," said O'Reilly, "this time you do me wrong—you do an injury to my ka-rac-ter: faith, then, and a'n't I bad enough?—yes, but I am; but not so bad as that comes to. Do you think, for a moment, that I'd deny visiting your maids, Captain Jedwards?—barring that, till now, I always thought they were not your maids, but your wife's."

"Sir," said Jedwards, "I have proof positive of the fact; it is, therefore, a mistaken notion of honour which leads you to deny it; you left one of your shoes in the cabin, in your

hurry to get away, and here it is," producing, at this juncture, Gentleman Jack's lost shoe. Paddy was so overcome with joy at finding that Jedwards knew nothing of his being drunk on his watch, and fast asleep, that he did not answer for some minutes, thinking, no doubt, that his commission would be more safe, if tried by a court-martial for the visit to the maids, than for drunkenness and neglect of duty.

He first of all looked at the shoe, and then at the captain; "Och, then, sir," said he, "since you're so kind as to assure me it's a mistaken notion of honour to deny the business, I wish, by no manner of means to persist in it, letting alone that it is not very dacent to contradict my superior officer; but, saving your presence, Captain Jedwards, I always thought I wore boots, to save stockings under them; but, if you say it's mine, it must be so; I only hope I may find his fellow, and then, by the powers, I will have a pair of them, as the devil said—but that's no matter; I must have been dreaming, any how."

"Well, Mr. O'Reilly," said the kind-hearted Jedwards, "for this once, I forgive what's past: but I must request you will not be cat-awauling amongst my maids, but keep these pranks for the shore." With this, they were both bowed out, to the great joy of all, and to none more so than Fitzjohn.

When they had got down on the middle-deck, O'Reilly called Gentleman Jack into his cabin, and, addressing himself to Fitz, said, "What did the skipper mane by all that palaver? I believe he is out of his senses, and has been draming."—"Why, Mr. O'Reilly," replied Fitzjohn, "I must confess you were gloriously drunk last night."

"Well, then, upon my conscience, if I wasn't beginning to suspect something of the sort myself."—"Exactly so, sir, and, when I found you caulking it in the nettings, I covered you up with the hammock-cloths, little expecting the skipper would have come out; and it was I who told him, at a venture, you were down in the ward-room, examining the chart."

"Well, my dear fellow, that's all plain enough, but about the shoe?"—"O leave that to me, Mr O'Reilly; give me the shoe, and I'll try to find the fellow of it."

"Och, powers! and is that it? and a nate, dacent boy

you are, Gentleman Jack ; but there's the shoe, and now be off with you—I say nothing ; for it won't do for the pot, you know, to call the kettle——No, sir, it won't, unless it be in the discreet language of Peachum, in the ' Beggar's Opera,' ' Brother, brother ! we are both in the wrong.' ”

A few days after the occurrences above stated, Fitzjohn, whilst larking about the rigging, playing at follow my leader, which Fitz then was, ran out on the main-top sail-yard, the ship being under whole topsails, and caught hold of the reef-tackle pendant, intending to come down by the after-leach of the main top-sail. The tackle, however, being slack, and not belayed below, Fitz unfortunately fell, and passing close to and abaft the main yard-arm, of course went overboard.

Though it was true that he forgot to sing out, like Jack to the Dutchmen, “ Twig that, you rascals ! ”—still, the sea being very little ruffled, and the ship going only about five knots, he, as soon as he recovered his breath, had the good sense to turn his back on the ship, fearing that the broken water which she displaced might settle his business at once. Occasionally, he would turn and look back to the George ; and the dreariest parts of his schoolboy's life had never seemed to creep along such icy laggards, as did those few minutes during which the boat was lowering down.

From the quantity of water imbibed by his clothes, Fitz felt himself every second still less able to keep his head above water. At last, he began to sink—first to his nostrils—then came the horrid sense of suffocation—the water passed over his eyes—a green and bubbling world seemed to surround him—his mother's prayer came involuntarily on his heart, and down he went.

With a sudden effort, he arose again, with just his eyes above water, and saw the boat's crew pulling as hard as they could towards him. He endeavoured to lift his hand once more above the surface, but his strength had totally failed him ; and, as he sank gradually, he saw the blue sky, through the green sea, above his head ; and the last effort of sensibility seemed to assure him that he had left the fair scene for ever.

His hat, however, having been tied to his button-hole by a lanyard, it kept near the surface of the water,—and as from the buoyancy of salt-water the body rarely at first

sinks more than four or five feet, the bowman of the boat knew where to dip his boat-hook, and had little difficulty in fishing up Gentleman Jack, though he himself remembered nothing, from sinking for the last time, until he found himself between hot blankets, before the galley-fire, with the surgeons blowing and rubbing around him.

"Holloa, doctor!—are you there?" cried Fitz, feebly;—"give us a glass of grog, that's a good fellow. You needn't be afraid of its being neat, for I've plenty of water in my hold already."

The surgeon, laughing, complied with his request, and ordered his patient into his hammock. Scarcely had he got there when one of the mids came down with a message from the captain, desiring to know how he felt himself.

"Tell the skipper," answered Gentleman Jack, half-seas over from the spirit they had given him, "that I only want one of his nursery-maids to sit by me, and then I shall be quite comfortable."

"Oh! you will, will you?" said a voice from behind. The group around Fitz' hammock made way, and there stood Captain Jedwards. Thinking it would be more kind to make his inquiries in person, he had followed on the heels of his messenger, and of course heard everything.

Perceiving that Fitz made no reply, the captain shook his head at him, saying, "It's quite enough that one of my nursery-maids has gone off into hysterics already: but I'll leave you to settle that with Mrs. Jedwards. So, now you've come to life again, go to sleep, you young Jack-anapes, that we may have you out of the list to-morrow."

Evening drew on—the time for quarters came—the pipe was heard, and all hands rushed upon the decks, to be mustered at their guns. Fitz, lying in his hammock in the solitude and semi-darkness of the orlop-deck, was in that delightful, dreamy state, half-conscious of the outer world, and wholly enjoying the inner one. As he nestled on his pillow, he fancied he felt some soft, gentle kiss on his cheek. He opened his eyes, and one of the fair tenants of the poop-cabin stood beside him. She was still in great distress, and had evidently been crying bitterly; but, of course, "*Gentleman Jack*" had a thousand words with which to soothe the apprehensions of his visitant. She remained condoling with him till the men were piped down

from quarters, when, with a parting kiss, she shot off like a frightened deer. If out of the twenty-four hours one single second should occur for opportunity—how surely does a woman hit it at the very nick!

CHAPTER XIII.

IN a few days the fleet anchored in Bantry Bay, when Jedwards' family left the ship for their own home.

Whilst lying in Beerhaven, a mutiny broke out on board the *Impetus*; but Bellow, with all his faults, was a fearless man, and would not communicate the fact to the admiral, being fearful it might spread through the fleet. On their arrival, however, at Minorca, a general court-martial was held, and many of the mutineers were executed.

As the boats of the fleet were ordered to attend the execution, the hanged men were distributed amongst them, to be carried out to sea and buried. Accident, on this occasion, very strangely, put into Fitzjohn's boat the identical seaman that had endeavoured to throw him over the top-rail on the splinter-net, at the breaking out of the mutiny—Jack Manson.

Whilst cruising in the Mediterranean, the fleet made several captures, and amongst them, two line-of-battle ships. Returning through the Straits of Gibraltar, the wind suddenly failing the *George*, she became becalmed, drifted under the batteries of Ceuta, and, before she could be brought to an anchor, was within reach of the enemy's shells, which were thrown with great precision. One of these fell on board, passed through the three decks and two tier of casks, and then burst, making, as the boatswain observed, a deuce of a row below: a large forty-two-pound shot tore up seven planks athwart-ships on the poop-deck, and Fitz was told, by way of joke, that it was death by the law to stop it.

Jedwards took everything very coolly, but it appeared to Fitzjohn not extremely pleasant, particularly as his ship could not fire again.

Soon after the fleet resumed their station off Brest, our hero received an *invite*, from the commander-in-chief, to

dine with him ; and, being the only one on board his ship who was asked that day, he could not make out why this honour was conferred on him.

Jedwards, however, very kindly gave him the jolly-boat, and desired him to keep her there to bring him on board again. It may easily be surmised that Master Gentleman Jack, on this occasion, took especial care to dress himself completely in a middy's full uniform :—white breeches ; long black boots up to the knees, with a button behind to keep them in place ; white kerseymere waistcoat, with two little pockets, and flaps deep enough to hold a tooth-pick ; single-breasted coat, hanger, black cross belt and breast-plate, and gold-laced hat.

As soon as Fitz arrived on the quarter-deck, after paying his respects to the earl, he put on his gold-laced hat, quite square by the lifts and braces, as his lordship's hat always was ; and, after the commander-in-chief had surveyed him from stem to stern, he said, quite loud, " You are the most properly-dressed officer in the fleet, sir."

At this compliment our hero could not but feel highly flattered ; and, at table, he was placed on his lordship's right hand. He now found that all the stiffness of the quarter-deck had vanished, and that the stern admiral was in reality an excellent companion. Having made some jocose allusion to the child's-napkin signal, he asked him what he had been about since he last saw him. Fitz replied he had been learning to sing " Bye, bye, Baby Bunting."

" Indeed," said his lordship, laughing, " I thought it was Jedwards who had learned to sing that."

Fitzjohn, being too fond of his captain to think of laughing at him behind his back, turned the conversation to their having drifted under the batteries.

As soon as the servants had retired, the admiral addressed himself particularly to Fitzjohn, taking from the hand of his secretary a packet, which contained a recommendatory letter from Fitz' first captain, Jack Pleasant. Out of this his lordship drew a sketch Fitz made of the French fleet, and the land near the entrance of the Harbour of Brest, which, the old hero said, did Gentleman Jack a great deal of credit ; and he concluded by offering to take him into his flag-ship, which Fitz, like a great fool, did not

accept, having before decided to get into an active ship going on foreign service as soon as possible.

When our hero came to take his leave of his gallant and veteran host, he desired him always to call on him when he came near him, whether at sea or on shore. This proved how truly St. V——t wished to serve him, and Fitz never failed to avail himself of the kind invitation.

Fitz had now got through his two years rated time as mid; and the eternal cruising off Brest showing no hopes of any service, he took the first opportunity of leaving the *George*. His good friend, Moss, received him at once on board his fire-brig, until something might turn up.

The fire-vessel which, in former days, used to be attached to fleets of war, was intended to be run alongside of, and lashed and hooked to, a disabled ship of the line, that would not surrender. This cruel and dishonourable mode of warfare has of late been abandoned in the open sea, and was used the last time at the burning of the French fleet at Isle D'Aix, in Basque Roads.

The way in which these ships are fitted up is as follows :—fore and aft, between and under the decks of a fire-vessel, are laid long tubes full of combustibles, which burn and smoke, but will not blow up. In the hold of the vessel, are three distinct magazines, filled not only with the same kind of combustibles, but also a quantity of buckets, with hooks at their ears and handles, and filled also with this slow, consuming fire.

These buckets are known by the name of stinkpots : at the bottom of these magazines, are laid a considerable quantity of shells, hand-grenades, and round hollow balls filled with a composition which, once ignited, can never be extinguished. When the vessel blows up, which she does ultimately, these fall on board the enemy, and, if he has escaped the fire before, he is pretty sure to take it after the explosion.

At the yard-arms, jib-boom-ends, and in other parts of the fire-ship, attached by chains, are grapnels, which, once hooked, are with difficulty, if ever, extricated, but by cutting the rigging in which they entangle.

When a fire-ship is ordered upon service, the trains are all laid by the gunner, and, as soon as she is fairly alongside the enemy, and the crew are in their boats, the captain sets

fire to the fuse attached to the train, and cut to burn one minute and a half. He then, being the last person, leaves her in the boat reserved for himself. If he is successful in burning the enemy, he is promoted—if he is taken by the foe, he is hanged—*et vois là la différence !*

After serving a few months on board the fire-brig, however, Gentleman Jack had the good fortune to be received on board a fifty-gun ship, the *Rumbly*, stationed in the North Sea. The captain, Burford, was a plain, straightforward, thorough-bred seaman, extremely attentive to his duties, and rigidly exacting the same from his officers and crew. The ship was a thoroughly well-organised British man-of-war. Unlike his two former captains, Burford always manœuvred the ship himself, being a hale, hearty, and powerful man, in the prime of life, and conscious of his own judgment on all occasions.

Fitz had no sooner joined, than he wrote to his mother to procure him letters of recommendation, and, in a few posts, received several. On presenting these to Burford, he said, "Young sir, I wish you to know that all this foolscap is quite unnecessary. I shall only judge of your merits by your behaviour; as this proves to be, so shall I certify when we part." This conduct was the more honourable, as not being a man of any interest himself, he had risen in the service by constantly keeping employed and doing his duty to the best of his power,—certainly the most satisfactory recommendation an officer could have; still, we too often see men of this stamp degrading themselves, by seeking an alliance, which can rarely be sincere, with those whose only merit is the accidental one of birth or connection.

The few months Burford remained captain of the *Rumbly*, she cruised in the Baltic and North Sea, and Fitz was gratified by feeling he had made great progress in his profession. The *Rumbly* was now suddenly ordered to Sheerness, and Burford was removed to the command of a large ship, to the regret of every one. On going away, he very kindly gave our hero to understand that he might accompany him; but, remembering Captain Pleasant's advice about changing often, and the *Rumbly* being ordered on foreign service, he decided to remain where he was.

The greatest expedition being used in fitting the *Rumbly*,

and Captain Sir High Topham being appointed to the command of her, there was, as usual, a general rout out of the officers. The same senior-lieutenant, however, remained, and, a few days before they were ready for sea, instead of going on foreign service, to Fitz's great annoyance the foreign stores were returned, and they were ordered to prepare for receiving an ambassador.

The ship hereupon went round to North Yarmouth, under the orders of the first-lieutenant.

The day after anchoring at this port, his excellency and the new skipper arrived: the first-lieutenant and Fitzjohn went in the barge to the jetty, and the former, leaving the latter in charge of the boat, thence went up to report the arrival of the ship to the admiral and his new superior.

Captain Topham having the character of being a taut hand, that is to say, a terrible flogger, one of the bargemen deserted from the jetty, to the great discomfiture of poor Fitzjohn, who reported him to the first-lieutenant, and the first-lieutenant to Topham.

After the usual ceremony of reading his commission, Topham sent for Gentleman Jack into his cabin, and lectured him severely for losing the man. As Sir High Topham was always very anxious to do the honours of his ship properly, the day the ambassador, Lord Whittleworth, was to be received on board, the decks were as white and holy as hand-stones could make them; the seamen were dressed in their best blue jackets, red waistcoats edged with blue, and white trowsers, the captain and officers in full uniform, and a captain's guard of marines drawn out, when the ambassador approached the ship accompanied by the admiral-in-chief.

As soon as they had arrived within a cable's length of the ship, the seamen manned the yards and rigging, and, at an appointed signal given by Topham, a salute of nineteen guns was fired. After his lordship had been received by the guard, the band played "Rule Britannia," and nineteen more guns were fired.

As soon as the ambassador had recovered from his sea sickness, the names of the officers and midshipmen were given to the ambassador's secretary, to mark off those which were to be asked to dinner—the table being kept by government.

Topham, finding that none of his middies were invited, sent word to the secretary to say that, as his midshipmen were gentlemen, if they were not thought fit to be received at the ambassador's table, he should dine with them in the cockpit.

Upon this, two middies were invited every day, and the ambassador assured Topham that it was quite an oversight on the part of his functionary. The middies, however, were determined to punish the ambassador's wine for the offence, be it whose it might, so that each asked the other to drink wine at dinner, which made two glasses; each mid asked his excellency and the secretary, which made four glasses; the chaplain, who was a jolly dog, and superintended the ambassador's victualling department, was certain of being asked, and to ask the middies in return; while, between the lieutenants and marine officers, two more glasses were screwed out. Master secretary, himself the chief offender, the young rogues used to designate "Snipe," from his long nose, and thimbleful of wine, and, judging from the latter that he was fearfully abstemious, they always made a set at him in the filling of his glass, saying, "Come, Mr. Secretary, drink off your heel-taps, and don't have any daylight in your glass: what's the top made for?"

The ambassador saw the game they were playing greatly to his amusement, for he was a real good fellow, and was supposed to have been the *cher ami* of the Empress Catherine.

On the arrival of the Rumbly at Copenhagen, whither the ambassador was ordered, to demand satisfaction for the detention of our merchant vessels, Sir High Topham and Fitzjohn remained for some days at the same hotel with the ambassador, Lord Whittleworth—the cause of this indulgence being, that Fitz was the only mid that understood French.

He had not been long ashore, before he remarked that the Danish officers were very attentive to him, and he used to ramble very frequently about the city and dock-yard with them. One morning, they received intelligence that twenty-six sail of British men-of-war had arrived at Elsinour. The Danes then began putting their batteries in order, and some of their hulk-ships were hauled out of the dock-yard. As, in addition to this, the ambassador seemed very crusty,

Fitz perceived that affairs were not going on as pleasantly as might be.

The junior officers of the Danish fleet were at the same time incessantly questioning him about the size and force of the ships at Elsineur; he therefore took the liberty always to add at least ten to their real number: at length, one evening, being at a grand christening, one of the captains of the port asked Fitzjohn to give him one of the English signal-books, since at that time every midddy used to carry a little pocket signal-book of his own getting up.

On making this modest request, the captain of the port intimated that he should be well remunerated for "his politeness." On this, Fitzjohn's indignation was such, that he could scarcely refrain from spitting in the Dane's face. Returning in the carriage with Topham, he mentioned it to his captain, begging him to give him leave of absence, that he might get one of his messmates up from the ship, and call the rascal out. "No, no," says Topham, "don't trouble yourself about that; we'll cook him with his own sauce."

This being resolved on, the skipper and his mid, sat up all night and made a new signal-book, so as totally to change the meaning of the signals, whilst Fitz painted the same flags as were then used, being rather expert, from long practice, at signal-painting.

At the end of this book, they wrote a list of the fleet, and the order of battle—of course totally different from what it really was; making it appear that ten of the apparent two-deckers were in reality three-deckers, with guns on their gangways, but concealed by their waist hammock-nettings.

A copy of this snare-book was also made for the English commander-in-chief. The next morning, the greatest activity prevailed. The ambassador had decided to embark, and Topham's little squadron, consisting of bomb-vessels, brigs, &c., formed a line of communication from Copenhagen to Elsineur, lying at a distance of about six miles from each other.

Fitzjohn, not being able to see the officer who had endeavoured to bribe him for the signal-book, he sealed it up in a double envelope, and left it with the mistress of the hotel to give it him.

For this little piece of service, Topham was very much pleased with him, treated him with great kindness, and made him signal-officer. As the squadron was lying in this long-extended line, nearly all communications were made by signal, and the signal-book story was constantly floating in his brain.

At the time of which I am writing, whenever it was required to make any number above tens, the pennant called the hundred pennant was hoisted above for one hundred. Thus, one hundred and sixty-three would be made by the hundred pennant and the signal for sixty-three; and, if it was two hundred and sixty-three, the hundred pennant would be below, so that the number of signals were very limited.

Whilst studying this on the poop one day, it occurred to Fitzjohn that by doing away with the pennants altogether, and letting the numerals follow each other downwards, they might have any number of signals without difficulty. Of this, he drew two or three examples, and added words to these, in addition to which he found he might spell any word he had not, though by placing a number to each word in the dictionary, the necessity for this could scarcely occur.

On this invention, he set his adjutant, the marine drummer, and himself to work, numbering a copy of Entick's Dictionary.

When this was quite complete, Fitz submitted it to the first-lieutenant, who caught at it immediately, and took it in to Topham; and, no sooner did the captain see it than he was delighted, assuring Fitz that on the first opportunity he would turn his attention to following up the plan.

After all the business had been settled amicably with the Danes, the middies were determined to give Topham and his officers, as well as the captains of the squadron, a dinner in the Rumbly's cockpit.

A boat, therefore, for this purpose was borrowed and manned by the middies to go to Elsinour and make the necessary purchases. The boat returned in the evening, towing off a staggering bob, or young calf, which was soon got on board and made into veal, which meat became, therefore, the predominant dish at the dinner.

Amongst other sweets and delicacies, it was decided that

a plum-pudding should grace the table; but, as the guests were so numerous, the reefers were puzzled where to get a pudding-bag in which there would be sufficient capacity to boil it. One honourable member proposed a night-cap, another a pillow-case, a third a flesh-bag, being a shirt tied up at the arms and neck, and, at last, it was decided to put the pudding into a large long worsted stocking—which, for the honour of the mess, I must state to have been bought new for the occasion.

The stocking having been brought on board, the mixed dough was crammed in as tight as the black cook could get it down, so that the shape of the foot and leg were as distinctly marked out as it could be, and, after it had been well-boiled, it was lowered down in a fire-bucket through the cockpit hatchway to the orlop-deck.

Here the dinner committee were once more at a loss how to get the stocking off, without breaking the leg; and, at last, it was decided to have Snip, the ship's tailor, down, to cut it off. A council of war was then held how they should place it on the table, no dish being large enough to hold it.

A lid of one of the middies' chests was soon rowed off its hinges, and, on one end of it was laid a quadrant-case, to raise and support the ancle, and the whole being covered with a clean cloth, the "duff" made a highly-prized and respectable dish, and the appearance of the *leg of pudding* was the laugh of the squadron for many days.

The Rumbly now returned by herself with the ambassador, and, having landed him at North Yarmouth, proceeded to Sheerness to take in foreign stores, for the destination which had been first allotted to her.

Topham now took Fitzjohn with him to London, where he remained. The duty assigned to him was that of compiling, with the assistance of a literary gentleman, whom Mr. Egerton the bookseller introduced to him, the telegraph signal-book, since then so long in use throughout the navy, the Admiralty giving him a guinea a day for his expenses. This task being completed, and some hundred copies printed off, Fitz rejoined the Rumbly, then completely fitted out for foreign service, and very deep in the water, having two casks of provisions between the breast of each gun and the ship's side.

The morning after the ship's company had been paid, or, as Jack termed it, with the money in one hand and the topsail-sheet in the other, the Rumbly started from the Nore, on the 9th of November, 1800, a fine clear morning, with a white sun. Both the pilots endeavoured to dissuade Topham from moving; but he was so anxious to pursue the secret orders, under which he was sailing, that at daylight they were fairly off under all sail.

At this, Fitzjohn, with all the fresh enthusiasm of youth, was indeed greatly rejoiced. Towards noon, however, the weather began to change, and the wind to snuffle, coming directly in their teeth. The pilots, observing these symptoms, kept their anxious eyes looking to windward, occasionally shaking their heads, at whom I don't at all pretend to say.

About three P.M. it came on to blow so hard, that our friends were obliged to let go their anchor, in the narrow entrance of Margate sands. The ship not bringing up, they at once cut away the mizen-mast: still she would not come head to wind; the mainmast was next cut by the board, and with it, as Falconer writes,—

“The faithful stay

Dragg'd the foretop-mast from its post away.”

One of the lanyards of the main rigging, meanwhile, held fast the lower part of the broken mainmast; and this thumped so hard under the Rumbly's counter, that her officers had serious doubts of its coming through: and, although she had two anchors down, the ship was not even then fairly brought up.

In this crisis, her larboard bow being the weathermost part of the ship, Topham expressed great anxiety to have this lanyard cut away; but the great difficulty was, to get at it. The chain-plate and dead-eye being torn from their place outside the main-channel, they were both under water, whenever the ship rolled to leeward.

Notwithstanding, however, the very dangerous nature of the service thus to be executed, in the face of a howling gale of wind, and in defiance of a most raging sea, Captain Topham had no sooner pointed out the act that was necessary to secure the safety of the ship, than Fitzjohn, and two main-top men, sprang over the side: lowering themselves down by such of the main chains as still were left in their

places, they at last succeeded in cutting the lanyards, with small hand-axes, which Sir High Topham had himself purchased out of his own pocket.

This gallant act of Fitzjohn's was not, however, completed, until one poor fellow had lost his hold, and was drowned: the other, and Fitzjohn, with great difficulty, contrived to regain the inside of the ship, through one of the main-deck ports.

The Rumbly, being at last freed from the wreck, came head to wind; but in so precarious a state, that it kept her crew pumping all night, not from leaks so much, perhaps, as from the quantity of water she had shipped.

Towards morning, the weather moderated, and, at twelve the next day, they were beating up to the Nore under jury-masts, being safely at an anchor by sunset.

Here was a change in twenty-four hours! A ship of the same size and force was, fortunately, lying in Sheerness Harbour; having hauled alongside of which, the Rumbly took out all her masts and rigging, and was at sea again, perfectly equipped, in five days.

As Fitz reflected to himself on these incidents, he could not help seeing, that one such week, in a young officer's life, did more to make him a good sailor, than three years loitered away in a commander-in-chief's flag-ship. As Sir High Topham was the senior officer of a small squadron of ships, having troops on board, and lying ready for his appearance at St. Helens, the Rumbly no sooner hove in sight at that anchorage, than they all got under way, and roceeded down the Channel.

A little to the westward of Portland, the wind came rotund to the S.W., and blew so tremendously, that it was with the greatest difficulty the squadron got safe to an anchorage in Weymouth, before dark.

The wind having shifted suddenly in the middle of the third night after the arrival of the Rumbly in Weymouth Roads, it came on to blow from the eastward. But Captain Topham had taken the precaution of keeping a pilot on board, and they now lost no time, but beat out of the bay, and ran through the Race of Portland, the sea breaking over both the gangways of their deeply-laden ship, so as to inspire no slight apprehensions that she would founder—though, to be sure, they had this consolation, that, as it is

this break of the water which denotes the deepest sea, so whatever the officers and crew might think of her going down, there was not the least reason to fear she would ever come up again. All the squadron were now in company, and, in a few days, they made the island of Madeira.

At this island, the captains of the squadron were summoned on board, the sealed orders were opened in their presence, and Topham hoisted a broad pennant, as commodore, under a salute from the Rumbly.

Captain Topham, whilst a lieutenant, being unable to get afloat, had commanded an East Indiaman, and was a first-rate navigator, a good seaman, and a strict disciplinarian. Being of a liberal and generous disposition, he kept a sumptuous table, and although envied by many of his brother officers, he was much liked by all his own, who were greatly devoted to him.

The lieutenants having been selected by himself, together with the warrant-officers, mates, and middies, the result was, that, during the four years Fitz served with him, not a single court-martial was held on any one in the ship. The seamen considered him too severe, and once had an intention of mutinying; but the officers being, as I have said, wholly with him, the intention was soon discovered, and instantly suppressed.

At Madeira, Fitzjohn and another middy wandered one evening in search of an adventure: and, as they had heard that the Portuguese used the stiletto rather freely, they agreed, in case of separation, to meet at a certain fountain, near the beach, and the first who arrived was to wait there until the other came. In the event of not meeting by midnight, the watcher was to alarm the police. After this discreet arrangement, these two prudent youths set off like a couple of the celebrated champions of Christendom, each on his own path, the end of which was, that Fitzjohn, having, with great dexterity, "got into a row," narrowly escaped assassination, and both he and his companion the missing of their ship, which sailed at day-break, at an hour before which they arrived on board.

As the Rumbly was likely to be at sea many months, her destination being Suez, at the top of the Red Sea, the youngsters obtained permission to publish a newspaper,

which was called the "Orlopian Gazette;" their motto was, "*Qui capit ille facit.*"

Fitz was chosen editor: and it was published, or rather written fair, once a week. The destiny of this hebdomadal was this: it first went to the commodore, then to the commissioned officers, and afterwards to the cockpit. The editor's box hung under the half deck, near the log-board, and was under charge of the sentinel; no one could open it but Fitzjohn, and he was sworn to secrecy. On the whole, Gentleman Jack got through his editorship tolerably well, having only been once clobbered for a little exercising of his satire, during the whole voyage out.

Naturally enough, all the young tyros were very anxious to know the ceremony usual on crossing the line: and, on the morning of the day that they passed the equator, one of the knowing ones tied a piece of packthread across the field-glass of the deck telescope, and left it purposely in the way of an ignoramus. This most ridiculous trap took, as they had expected: and, on the Galoot coming on deck, and taking up the telescope to look round the horizon, he immediately observed the packthread, magnified by the power of the glass, and, with great ecstasy, called out to the commodore, "Dear me, sir, if I don't see the line very plain indeed."

This erudite vociferation was made, to the great amusement of the commodore, and the whole mischievous tribe of the cockpitii, who were there to laugh at his folly; so that when Neptune and his lady came aft on the grating, with their oakum wigs, the Galoot was the first person handed over to the wash-deck tub.

On the passage of the Rumbly to the Cape they made some captures: and, as Fitz fancied himself very much in love before he left England, with a young lady in the chaste vicinity of Gosport, he laid out all his prize-money in purchasing muslins, coral beads, and other articles of finery for a lady's boudoir and toilette. These he packed up most carefully in two sandal-wood trunks, ready to be sent home by the first man-of-war going to England.

Having done this, with the utmost care, and in defiance of the laughter of his companions, he proceeded to the important point of putting on the trunks the name and address of the young lady. Here however he was sud-

denly puzzled, being unable to get further than Miss Maria——

Alas ! poor Gentleman Jack : so gallant was he in every port, that the very number of his deities bewildered his devotion, nor could he for the life and soul of him call to his memory any more of her than Miss Maria——

In the next Orlopian Gazette that appeared, he was, as he might well have expected to be, most terribly cut up, in a paper that purported to give the whole of his amour, under the title of “Maria and her dog.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE Cape of Good Hope has been so often described, that it is needless here to trouble my readers with a description of the town and its environs. Soon after the arrival of the Rumbly, a circumstance occurred which left an impression on the memory of Fitzjohn, that was never afterwards obliterated.

The commodore and himself boarded and lodged in the amiable Dutch family of Van B—— The family consisted of the father, mother, one son, three daughters, and a niece. On the return of Sir High Topham and our hero, one evening, they found that the father, mother, one daughter, and the niece, had all been most horribly assassinated by the male Malay servant, who, in one of those fits of religious insanity, common to the Malays, had “run a muck,” as it is called.

The horror Fitzjohn felt at seeing the four bodies laid out in one of the parlours, with all of whom he had dined a few hours before in perfect health, it was impossible to describe.

When the Malays used to “run a muck,” after the conquest of the Cape, our sentinels had orders to bayonet or shoot every one they might find bearing a drawn and bloody creese; and these Malays have been known, in such cases, to run on the bayonets of our soldiers, to avoid the horrible and dreadful death to which the Dutch laws subjected them. In the present instance, the governor had given immediate orders for the apprehension of the assassin alive, and if possible without injury. This order was duly executed, and

the Malay was the second so taken. He was, of course, given up by the governor to the Dutch civil authorities, in order that they might deal with him according to their law.

On the ensuing morning, soon after daylight, the assassin was brought, heavily chained and handcuffed, by six of the Dutch police, to view the bodies, that he might then declare his guilt or innocence.

As Fitzjohn had determined to witness the whole ceremony of his punishment, he took care to be present. On the question being put to him as to his guilt, the prisoner answered firmly, as he held his right hand above his head,—*"It was this hand that did it!"*

The revengeful countenance of the villain was at this moment truly diabolical, and flitted before the eyes of those who had seen it for months after it had ceased to possess a more than imaginary existence. The cause that urged on the atrocious villain was as follows.

Emmeline, the daughter, had threatened to inform her father, that one of the damask dinner-napkins was missing; and, as the servant had been punished before, by the father, for a trifling transgression, of which Emmeline had been the complainant, the blood-thirsty wretch ran up-stairs for his creese, and returned with it into the dining-room, where Emmeline and her cousin were still remaining.

Aiming at her left collar-bone, a blow which cut in a drawing direction, the creese had entered a little below the spot intended, and had literally laid the poor girl open from the upper part of the left breast almost down to the right hip. The niece, her cousin, in running out of the room to alarm her uncle, was stabbed behind: the uncle, hearing the cries of his beloved daughter, was hastening into the parlour to her assistance, when the villain stabbed him to the heart: the wife, coming down-stairs, received a drawing cut from the left ear across the jugular vein, and fell dead on the landing-place.

The assassin now ran out of the house into the street, and was thrown down by one of the Dutch police throwing a stick between his legs whilst running, at which the Dutch are particularly expert: an English guard then secured and disarmed him.

On the third day after the capture of the murderer, he was brought to trial, and condemned to be broken on the

wheel. The morning after his sentence had been pronounced was that ordered for carrying it into effect. The spot for execution was opposite the landing-place. All the Malay servants of the town and its environs were obliged to attend, to the number of three hundred.

A wheel of large diameter having been procured, its surrounding edge, or tire, was widened by planks, bolted on, to the breadth of two or three feet. This was then mounted on its axis, so clear of the ground as to allow an intervening space of three feet. The culprit was next lashed upon its circular edge, thus widened as above; his extended hands and feet were secured with cords around the planking, and his arms, thighs, and legs, were kept in their places, in a similar manner, by means of rings, which were bolted through the planks.

When the unhappy wretch was duly lashed in his place, a priest read some lines to him, which Fitz learned afterwards that it was doubtful whether he understood; while his grinning, revengeful, satyr-like face seemed not to have lost one atom of its ferocity.

Around this horrifying scene, and at a distance from the wheel, a line of British soldiers, in single, open file, was drawn up. Behind these were the Malay servants, and without, again, stood a double row of British troops.

In the centre of the circle, near to the wheel, stood a pole, or mast, nearly forty feet high, with ropes and tackles attached and depending from the top. The judge who had condemned the criminal stood forward, conspicuous from his gown and octagonal cap, surrounded by a broad gold band.

The wheel was now turned slowly round, and the executioner, with a short iron crow-bar, deliberately broke the leg, thigh, and arm-bones of the assassin, but not a cry nor a moan escaped him. This severe punishment having been gone through at some length, the murderer was unlashd, and removed to a large waggon-wheel, to which he was fast bound, and which was placed horizontally on the top of the pole, and there left to all the dreadful agony of the most prolonged and torturing death. Incredible as it may seem that the tenacity of human life should go so far, yet it is a fact, that this Malay was seen to writhe his limbs on the evening of the second day; still, however, the body re-

mained exposed, and, ere a week, was nearly devoured by the birds of prey. His gentle and beloved victims were buried on the eve of his execution, and their funeral was attended by the garrison, as well as by most of the respectable inhabitants.

About this time, Sir High Topham added to his squadron a fast-sailing store-ship, having on board a quantity of small arms, and eight hundred barrels of gunpowder, together with supplies for the troops. The master being a drunken person, the commodore was obliged to remove him from his command, and Fitzjohn had the good fortune to be chosen in his place.

Our hero, Gentleman Jack, having been put in possession of this, his first command, began to feel and consider himself a mightily independent man; when, as if effectually to check his growing pride, he had scarcely got to the northward of Madagascar, when his ship took fire, in consequence of some lighted tobacco having fallen amongst the spare sails that had been indiscriminately stowed around the main magazine, built in the midships of the vessel, for the purpose of security.

The first symptom of the calamity that had befallen him, was observed at two o'clock in the morning, when a dense smoke was seen to arise from the main hatchway; and as every one knew that the powder was stowed away in that part of the ship, nothing could depict the consternation of the crew.

Fitzjohn and his vessel were at this time at least three hundred leagues from the nearest land, and had lost sight of the squadron some days before. He knew it required the exertion of every one to extinguish the smothered fire; and a moment's consideration decided him to hoist out all the boats, and tow them astern of the ship.

This having been accomplished, he had them all cut adrift, and addressing himself to the ship's company, pointed out to them, that nothing could save their lives but the most decided exertions to extinguish the fire. Since it would be better to be blown up, than land amongst the cannibals on that part of the coast of Africa, which, if they made land at all, would most probably be their fate.

On hearing this, and witnessing his example, they set to work in good earnest, and by dint of the wash-deck pump

and the few buckets they had on board, they were enabled to prevent the smoke from ever becoming flame, and at the expiration of the third evening, had the satisfaction of having extinguished every appearance of fire.

They now cleared away everything from around the main magazine, and, on closely examining it, discovered that the bulk-head, which separated the powder-barrels from the main-hold, was so nearly calcined, that the carpenter pushed his finger through it without much exertion. Nothing could exceed the feelings of Fitzjohn and his men when they discovered what a narrow escape they had met with; and, on returning thanks, which they did publicly on the quarter-deck, their prayers came from the bottom of their hearts.

Having furled all the sails on the main-mast, when the fire was first discovered, got rid of all the rigging they could spare, and contented themselves with wearing round occasionally, they had remained nearly stationary, and never lost sight of their boats, which were easily recovered. Very luckily, Fitz fell in with the squadron a few days afterwards, and they were relieved from the anxiety of having any longer the charge and responsibility of keeping the powder on board.

The squadron now soon made one of the Manilla islands, which were peopled by blacks of the Abyssinian class. These had never before come in contact with Europeans. A well-brightened button procured them, with ease, a goat, but there was a difficulty in getting a general supply of live stock and fruit for the squadron.

The natives were invited to bring down all the bullocks, goats, and poultry, and vegetable productions, of which they might wish to dispose; but the prices had increased enormously during the few days they had remained off the coast; and Sir High Topham, resolving to punish these Jews of savage nature, landed, one evening, three hundred men.

The arms and ammunition of these seamen and marines were concealed; and as they pretended to wash their clothes along the whole line of the beach, abreast of the ships, they suddenly surrounded the stock brought down, all of which was paid for at fair prices, and the squadron procured about ten days' fresh provisions.

CHAPTER XV

THE destination of the squadron, of which Fitzjohn's ship formed a part, was, as the reader knows, the Red Sea; and on their arrival at Mocha, they with difficulty procured a supply of half-brackish water, for which they were obliged to pay an enormous price, and the fresh provisions were of the worst quality; the dola, or governor, being rather in the French interest, did all he could to prevent the English squadron getting their supplies, and thus the northerly monsoon had set in before they could be ready.

As the Red Sea was at this period little known, and no enemy's ships were to be found, the commodore, very properly, ordered each vessel to make the best of its way to the destination of them all. Being becalmed one night near the island of Gibet Tor, Fitzjohn anchored, and during the night turned, and brought on board, the ensuing morning, ten very fine turtle.

After carrying a press of sail for six weeks, they had beaten up more than thirty degrees of latitude, and anchored safely in the harbour of Cosseir, where they found another English squadron, with three thousand troops brought from our East India possessions, to attack the French army in the rear.

The whole of this division of our forces was commanded by that gallant officer, Sir David Baird. Although the Indian officers had brought with them all their eastern luxuries of palanquins, hookahs, &c., they had forgotten that most useful of all necessaries, the means of transporting water, so that the whole fleet were set to work to make small casks, containing about six gallons each, called barricoes, or breakers; and such was the scanty supply of the pure element, that the rate of exchange was at that of two bottles of spirits for one of water.

So extreme was the scarcity, that only one tumbler a day was the allowance; and each man, on going to dine with the captain, took his water in his hand, which till then he had locked up in his chest; and woe to him whose water was spilt by the rocking of the ship. By way of assuaging thirst, these poor fellows used to dip their shirts in the salt water, wring them out, and put them on wet.

When a convoy of these above-named barricoes was complete, eight were put on the back of a camel, and several of these marched off under the guard of seamen, armed with a cutlass, a ship's pistol, and a boarding pike.

As these marches were generally made by night, to avoid the heat of the day, they used to steer by compass. At daylight one morning, just as the camels were laid down to take their rest, which used to be in the form of a crescent, a party of Bonaparte's dromedary cavalry, with a musketoon mounted on the foremost hump of each, approached the party then carrying the barricoes, under the command of Fitzjohn.

As the jack tars had no muskets, they were directed to lay down behind their camels. The French officer, who commanded the opposite party, approached with his twenty armed dromedaries, without even sending out his advanced guard to reconnoitre.

It was with great difficulty Jack could be kept quiet until they were so near that the seamen's pistols would tell, if necessary; since orders had been given, not to wound the animal, but to kill or take the soldier, if possible. As soon as they had approached quite close, the Frenchmen, not suspecting an enemy, having taken no precaution against surprise, out rushed the Jack tars between the spaces left by the couchant camels, and firing their pistols with three cheers, the dromedaries took fright, and Fitz contrived to take four animals and five soldiers, the one dromedary having dismounted his rider. The rest fled, and managed to get clear off.

Before, however, they began their march the next evening, they had made the Frenchmen change their jackets with the sailors, so that there were two always in advance of the captured dromedaries: and on their arrival at Moses' Wells, about midway on the journey, one of the English regiments got under arms, thinking, from the tricoloured feathers, that they were the advance guard of the French army.

Fitzjohn's party having delivered their cargo of water, they returned with the empty barricoes, and by this means, for many days kept the army supplied until they reached the Nile.

This service being ended, and all the troops disembarked,

Sir High Topham hastened to reach Mocha before the N.E. monsoon had finished blowing. As Gentleman Jack was standing on the jetty one morning, just before the departure of the squadron for Cosseir, Fitz observed the boat of an Arab brig sculled ashore by one man, who had the appearance of an Englishman, even although he wore a dirty ragged white turban on his head.

As soon as he had got on shore, Fitzjohn heard him exclaim, as if to himself, "Thank God I sees the old St. George's ensign again," alluding to the colours flying on board the man-of-war.

The natural inclination of Fitz induced him to address the stranger, and ask from whence he came. After giving our hero a most tremendous grip, an old familiar voice exclaimed, "Why, Gentleman Jack, my boy, where the devil do you hail from?" Fitzjohn, on hearing this, looked stedfastly into the other's face;—"Egad, it can't be—and yet—no! By Jove, tho' it is—old Jim Bell! Jim, my boy, who'd have thought of meeting you here? Give me your fist again, and let us have the whole log of your proceedings ever since you left the *Impetus*."—"Oh! blow me tight, little Gentleman Jack, if I'm a going to be guilty of such a hact anywhere but over a grog-bottle. Master Bellow soon bundled me and Pipes out of the ship—me because I had not got a lord for my father, or didn't speak good grammar, or some other reason I couldn't understand."

"And old Pipes, for what was he turned adrift?"—"Oh! by jingo, both Poll and old Pipes too were broke for drunkenness. I wrote to our old skipper, Jack Pleasant, and he got me into the A——, transport service, and I dare say would have done something too for old Pipes, only I could never lay hands on the old beggar, after we all landed at the Hard. He was seen now and then of a night, knocking about Common Hard, but was mightily afeard of being pressed before the mast. Howsomedever, my old craft having come up into these latitudes, I left our fleet on the other side of the desert, (meaning at Alexandria,) and being inclined to voyage, I thought as how I would walk over and take a look at the Red Sea, whilst my transport was lying idle in the harbour. So I makes a little snug stowage of provisions, and off I sets without saving a word

to no one. When I'd got about two days' sail on the desert, a gentleman on horseback rides up to me, and as near as I could make out by his motions seemed to say, 'Jim, my boy, I wants that ere jacket;' so, as I'd no harms and he'd a devilish long spear in his hand, a swaggering sword hanging from his larboard-quarter, and a brace of pistols on his bows, besides its being mighty hot, I thought as how I might just as well give him the jacket. You know, Gentleman Jack, one can't fight without harms; so next day, another gemman, just for all the world like the first, hails me in the same sort of way, and seemed to say 'Jack, I must have them ere blue trowsers;' upon which, not understanding this country's lingo, I says, to-myself, D—n me, though, we'll have a fight for it. Whether he heard me say so or no I can't tell, but out he pulls one of his pistols, and taking haim, was just going to let a little daylight through my carcass, when thinks I, as the jacket's gone, I may jist as well give him my trowsers, I shall only then be like one of them ere Scotch regiments. So I doffs my trowsers, and thinks I, it is as well now to black my rudder-case. So tho' whether or no a fellow may be decent, though he is forced to go naked. On I goes werry comfortably, under easy sail all night, and in the morning watch I comes to some trees. Here I finds a convoy of camels and some other creatures they call Harabs, so I comes to an anchor and goes fast asleep, and when I come to rouse up again, I found that them ere craft had helped themselves to my hat, shoes, and neck-cloth, and square-sail, without so much as saying, 'fair weather to ye.' Here, says I, Jim, you're in a pretty mess; but go on, my hearty, you must never say die; so I claps a bit of old rag them ere Harabs had left behind, a top of my truck to keep the sun's rays out of my brain-pan, and off I goes once more. Towards sun-down I spied a brig with her top-gallant yards across, and as I carried all sail, I got on board her at a place called Sucz, jist at sun-set. Come, says I, all's well that ends well, and change is no curse any day in the week; so I makes a bargain to work my passage to the Hinges, as this here brig had no Britisher aboard. Well you must know, my boy, after we had been at sea three days, the plague broke out, and as we had no doctor, they dies off pretty briskly. Holloa, Jim,

thinks I, every one for himself and the devil take the hindermost. So I goes up into the foretop, and cuts the ratlines of the catharpin shrouds, so that no one could come up arter me, and I takes all the duty of the foretop to myself. But, howsomedever, when they wanted me to do anything with the foretop-sail, 'No, no,' says I, 'give us a basket of prog first,' says I, 'or the divil a thing will I do.' Lucky for us, my hearty, we had a fair wind all the way down this ere Red Sea,—which arter all, ant a bit redder than I see, than any other sea, and if I'd a know'd that, bless me if I'd e'er a taken the trouble to beat across that there burning desert to see anything about it. However, here we be at last, but I don't think there are many shipmates of mine alive in the brig by this time. I've only seen five these last three days, and we had nearly a hundred when we started, as they brings pilgrims for some good sort of place about here."

Here the narrative of Jim Bell being finished, Fitzjohn asked him to go on board of his craft and take luncheon with himself, her commander, an offer which he joyfully accepted, adding, coolly enough, "I think, too, the sooner I gets rid of these clothes the better, since the last gemman wot they belonged to, died of that ere plague, aloft there in the fore-top, the matter didn't signify;—but coming on shore naked like was another story, and as I hadn't time to be over-nice, I boned a pair of overhauls from the first dead Turk I came athwart of." On hearing this pleasing intelligence, Fitz would not, of course, allow him to go on board, till at least he had changed his clothes, and bathed; and even then, most fully expected that he should see the death-spots appear the next morning on his old friend's person. But Jim laughed at his fear, drank his grog, ate his allowance, turned into his hammock, slept nine hours, and arose the next morning as if the plague were a mocking fable. Fitzjohn's store-ship being now discharged, he returned to the Rumbly, and Topham having detained a neutral vessel, off Aden, on suspicion of her carrying provisions, &c., for the French army, Gentleman Jack was put on board of her as prize-master, with orders to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope. His crew consisted of himself, a renegado Portuguese as a mate, a Norwegian as the other mate, four Danish seamen, ten Englishmen, and two boys;

making altogether twenty souls. Fitzjohn had asked Topham to let Jim Bell go with him, but the reply was, "Mr. Bell is wanted on board," where he was appointed, as in the *Impetus*, mate of the hold, his predecessor, in that office, having been promoted acting lieutenant. Gentleman Jack's new command was armed with four six-pounders, and having sailed with a fair wind, they calculated on a speedy arrival.

CHAPTER XVI.

FEW men have lived long in this world, without finding how often their calculations are frustrated. So it was with Gentleman Jack; for on the tenth night, the vessel struck violently three times on an island not laid down in any of the charts, and after the third shock became quite immovable. On proceeding to take the soundings around the ship, they found her bow in five feet water, her stern in eleven; between the bow and the stern, the water was from eighteen to twenty-four feet deep; so that the craft was perched, as it were, on two rocks, and as there was not sufficient sea to lift the after-part of the vessel, Fitzjohn furled all sail, and determined to lie quiet until the morning, which of course he most anxiously expected.

When day broke, they had come over, at least, four miles of broken water—how, they didn't exactly understand; and were now not more than two cables' length from a low island covered with cocoa-nut trees down to the beach, while in the interior was higher land.

As their ship happened to be on the weather side of the island, or what is termed a lee-shore, all hopes of getting her afloat soon vanished, and as the natives had collected in great numbers on the beach, Gentleman Jack thought it best to put out a feeler as to their disposition towards his crew: utterly ignorant as the unenlightened wretches must be, that fate had destined to their rugged shores so polished a commander and a gentleman as himself, one altogether of more than ordinary distinction—to say nothing of his title, and so on;—with this view he despatched as his envoy to these natives, the Portuguese, who was almost as black as themselves: a compliment, I may remark, which even in

their rude diplomacy they did not fail to appreciate as it deserved. The orders given to Fitz' ambassador were, carefully to keep his *fire-arms* concealed, and not to make *use of them*, but in the greatest emergency. This is what Bonaparte would have termed secret instructions. Fancy, old Talleyrand coming over with such private directions. Fitz having observed the natives were quite naked and without arms, and having no presents in the ship, and being desirous of not making them anxious for any articles they had on board, he gave his plenipotentiary, as presents to the leading chief, two uniform buttons, and a dozen of fishing-hooks, having long been convinced in his own mind, that many Europeans have been sacrificed to their own folly in presenting hatchets, nails, and such invaluable presents to the natives, who consider, that by getting possession of the ship, they should have as many as they could desire.

Our hero, however, desired the mate to land with not more than two persons, leaving the other four in the boat at a grapnel, half-pistol shot from the beach. These orders were punctually obeyed, and, on the moment of his landing, the ambassador was conducted half a mile inland and presented to a middle-aged, sleeky jet-black lady, whom they soon found to be the queen of the island. Her majesty, who had every appearance of simple-heartedness, received the buttons and fish-hooks very graciously, and in return sent back an invitation to Gentleman Jack expressive of the pleasure she would feel on his paying her a visit. Before Fitzjohn, however, attended to any further ceremony, he determined to sound all round the ship, after a more attentive and extended manner than before; when finding it totally impossible to heave her off, or even then to keep her afloat, he replied, by the Portuguese, to her majesty of the island, that he should pay his respects to her majesty in the cool of the evening.

Gentleman Jack now employed his men in lightening the ship as much as possible, and started all the water; but the tide rose so inconsiderably, that he resolved on landing everything as soon as possible. On his visit to the queen, Fitz proposed to purchase a certain space of ground, abreast of the ship, which was agreed by her majesty to be sold for forty uniform buttons, and some bright copper neck and

wristbands, samples of which, he had procured to be made from the hoops of some powder casks, intending to exchange them for fresh provisions, on his passage to the numerous islands with which that sea abounds.

Fitz stipulated to deliver the buttons before he landed anything, and to send in the neck and wristbands in a week. The ground was carefully walked over by the queen and himself, he having always with him a guard of six men, and her majesty about twenty of her most honourable privy council.

The next day, they got the four six-pounders carefully ashore, and completely covered over with old sail-cloth; and by the evening they had thrown up for them a sort of embrasure, made by filling empty water-casks with sand. Two of these members of parliament were placed at each end of their territory, which extended for about seven English acres, and at each battery Fitz hoisted an union jack.

Within this enclosure, they built tents of the sails, and made store-rooms for the goods: and their territorial line of demarcation was pointed out by ropes run through posts, made of broken spars. Of fire-arms, the natives were totally ignorant, so that Fitzjohn, on finishing his entrenchment, had every reason to count on the security of himself and crew.

After working very hard for sixteen days, they had saved to themselves six months' provisions from the wreck; and, as Fitz had requested several days' delay for the delivery of the neck and wristbands, he appointed for the same, the fourth of June, the birth-day of his king, George the Third. Determining to make a little ceremony of the matter, and to fire a salute, on the arrival of the day in question, he dressed up his body-guard with red bunting sashes round their waists, and made them appear very smart.

For himself, he mounted his best uniform coat; but as all the buttons had been cut off to pay for the land, he was obliged to loop it together. His gold-laced hat, although much tarnished by the three years' use he had out of it, since he left England, was cleaned up tolerably well. Previously to this grand affair, in order that the natives might have some idea of what was to follow, he had shown them the power which fire-arms gave their possessor, by having bullocks and kids killed by them in their presence.

Still, none of the six-pounders had ever, as yet, been discharged on the island: and, fearing the queen might be seriously alarmed at the noise, Fitz invited her and her attendants into his tent. This was made of the square mainsail, divided into three compartments, two being in the rear for the powder and the spirits, and the third, or whole length front of it, which faced the wreck, being kept for his own cabin.

A little before one, on the 4th of June, Fitz walked to the rope, which formed the English line of territory, to receive the Queen of Ragotum, such being the name of her kingdom, or, as Jack Tar called it, the Ragged Island. Fitz now appearing, for the first time, in full uniform, with his gold-laced hat, shipped and squared by the lifts and braces, the surprise with which she and her attendants viewed it, was not to be forgotten: all of them keeping their eyes uplifted at the gold binding, in silent wonderment.

As the signal for firing the salute was to be the taking off the identical hat, the health of the king was drank, with three times three: and at one o'clock precisely off went his hat, and the guns began to fire.

Thousands of birds now rose, screaming, from all parts of the island: and her majesty and attendants fell down, some flat on their faces, at full length, and others on their knees: nor could Fitz for a long time persuade them that the taking off the hat was not the *cause* of, but the signal for, the guns firing.

Her majesty, as soon as she had somewhat recovered her royal frustration, condescended to take part of a glass of Cape Madeira, that Fitz had first tasted, and seemed so inclined to take another, that he could not refuse to give it to her. But, as the habitual drink of these simple islanders was water and the juice of the cocoa-nut, he feared very much that intoxication might have pernicious effects on these happy and innocent persons.

On the first visit of Fitzjohn to the queen, he had found her, as the Portuguese had led him to expect, a jocund dame, with lustrous eyes, in the zenith of life—a diamond of the coal-black species. When she saw Gentleman Jack's tall, strong figure, rigged out in his undress uniform, she advanced a step, and held up her arms. This might have

been merely an attitude of surprise; but Gentleman Jack, taking it, after his own manner, for a fair invitation, speedily filled up the vacuum with his broad shoulders, and gave her sable majesty a hearty kiss.

As soon as the queen could draw back, she appeared at this new ceremony to be taken a little off her guard, certainly, but far from displeased; for the look of wonderment having passed from her face, one of pleasure succeeded, and bending forward, she repaid with interest of cent. per cent. the favour which our hero had conferred on her. This introductory scene being over, she invited Fitz to sit down with her, and partake of a collation of cold baked kid, and fruit, which had been laid out beneath the shadow of some trees. During the repast, the Portuguese proceeded to interpret to Fitz the conversation of her majesty. This seemed not the easiest task imaginable: and the dragoman was frequently obliged to have recourse to signs to eke out their mutual meaning.

The 4th of June being on a Sunday, Fitz read prayers to his crew, for the first time since their wreck, and most ardently did the ship's company return thanks for their deliverance. As some of the natives, as well as the queen, remained during this religious ceremony, and knelt when the seamen did, Fitz perceived that they also were not without their full belief in a Supreme Being.

The sacred ceremony being over, Fitz allowed the mate and four men to walk into the interior, cautioning them to be back by sunset, which they were. As the crew had saved so much out of the wreck, they ceased working between eleven and three o'clock, and did not work on the Sunday.

Stowed on the kelson, and over the ballast of the ship, were seventy hogsheads of spirits, intended for the French army in Egypt. This, Gentleman Jack naturally considered, to be a very important charge, and therefore went every evening to see the hatches well secured, that the spirits might not be touched by the crew nor given to the natives.

As the time had arrived when it was necessary to decide on some means of disposing of them, at one time Fitz thought of burning the hull, spirits and all; but, on reflection, he considered that by so doing he should lose some

valuable iron, timber, and other articles which they might require, in case he should build a sloop to take himself and seamen off the island.

He was, however, soon afterwards relieved from all his brown studies and anxieties on this account: for the change of the monsoon taking place shortly afterwards, a tornado came on, which not only blew down all the tents, and many of the cocoa-nut trees, to which the ropes were made fast, for the purpose of steadying the poles, but blew the wreck right over. On the following morning, the keel of the vessel was just out of the water, and exposed to view from the shore, together with only a very few feet of the bulwark of the larboard bow.

This disaster, if such it may be called, occasioned our hero and his men at least six days' hard work, to replace the damage in their little territory. The tornado had scarcely ceased, however, when the natives came down in great numbers, to offer their assistance in repairing the injuries sustained; but this, Fitzjohn, though feeling very grateful to them, would not accept, as he wished to show all parties that he was totally independent, and able to take care of himself.

Many nights after the capsizing of his ship, Fitz kept the matches lighted, and ready for action, in case of a surprise, since he was now entirely in the power of the islanders. Before this accident, the natives always fancied that Fitzjohn had more men in the ship. This idea he very wisely encouraged, by firing a volley of small arms every evening, at sunset, from the off-side of the wreck, immediately after he had seen the hold locked up.

The sailors having little or nothing to do, Fitz did not, therefore, greatly regret the accident which had furnished them with a few days' work, by the end of which time they had set everything straight. Now, however, arose a fresh cause of mortification; for one evening he discovered one of his best men in a state of complete intoxication. At this, he was certainly most excessively vexed, not only from the crime being that of drunkenness, but from its being aggravated, as in the memorable case of Tom Bennett, in the mutiny at Spithead, by theft; Fitzjohn felt assured that the culprit must have stolen the spirits with which to get drunk, since he had served out to his crew nothing but

Cape wine, which he drank himself, and of which he still had left, many months' store.

Painful as it was to him, he was determined to punish this first innovation on the discipline of the service: since the articles of war were regularly read, and the muster-book had been kept the same as if he had been afloat—by which means they were entitled to their pay.

Viewing the circumstance thus, Fitzjohn felt it a duty he owed to the rest, and to the future safety of all, to keep up the discipline as substantially as if the pendant still flew over their heads.

Having, soon after his first entry into the service, determined never to punish any of his men, without sleeping on it, he awoke in the morning feverish and unhappy. Not only from the pain it gave him to witness the tearing of a fellow creature's flesh, but from the indelible disgrace it attaches to the individual so punished.

Many a brave and good man it was his lot in later life to witness so cowed and disgraced in his own opinion, that even in the day of battle he has not done his duty with that alacrity and proper feeling which he would otherwise have displayed; and although he very much feared that corporal punishment could never be dispensed with, *whilst* British men-of-war are obliged to take part of their crews from *gaols* and *prisons*, as in the last war, still it is very possible, and not difficult, to form, on board the ship in which the offence is committed, a court of inquiry, composed of commanding and warrant officers, and superior seamen: there to judge whether the alleged crime has been proved, the captain being left to decide on the quantum of punishment to be inflicted.

At the least, the *articles of war themselves* should—as we believe they now do—forbid any kind of corporal punishment being inflicted sooner than at the expiration of twenty-four hours after the supposed breach of discipline has taken place, for accusation is not proof, and in the army no soldier can be corporeally punished by the sole will of the colonel.

To return—the time at last arrived, when it was necessary that poor Gentleman Jack should decide on the fate of the delinquent. At the usual hour of seven bells the hands were turned up, when six of the best men stepped forward,

and asked it as a favour from all the ship's company, that Fitzjohn would forgive him, offering themselves as hostages for his good behaviour.

Greatly indeed did Fitz rejoice at being thus relieved from so painful a part of his duty, but being determined to show them that his forgiveness of the culprit did not proceed from any fear of their numbers, he gave no answer until the offender was stripped and tied up. He then desired the six men to attend, and told the prisoner, it was entirely owing to their general good conduct that he granted their request, which had saved him from the three dozen lashes he would otherwise most certainly have received.

CHAPTER XVII.

As every day brought with it less employment, Fitzjohn established a kind of school, so that in a few weeks every seaman could read writing, and many of them were enabled to write a sort of scrawl themselves. To have a sentinel at each battery, and one at his door, now appeared unnecessary, so he withdrew the guns from their embrasures, and placed the whole of them in a half-moon form before his cabin, which front he had changed towards the island as soon as the ship fell over. By this arrangement, one sentinel served for himself and the guns.

As there were no canoes on the island, Gentleman Jack was anxious to secure the boats, by turning them bottom upwards, under a sail purposely extended to make a boat-house. Previously to this, the boats had been put in thorough repair, and were fit for service; and, as the natives could not make use of them, Fitz was anxious to keep from the latter the knowledge of the number and size of those boats he had left, and which were quite sufficient to carry himself, crew, and provisions, to the Mauritius, or to Madagascar, when the N.E. monsoon had fairly set in.

The position occupied on the beach by the seamen was extremely low, and, as they knew only a corner of the island, Fitz obtained permission to make a tour into the interior, particularly to a high hill which they could distinctly see with their glasses, about twelve miles off. On this eminence,

it was the wish of Fitzjohn to keep, if possible, an union-jack continually flying, in the hope of attracting the notice of some passing sail.

Such are the chances of a sea-life, that on the spot where Fitz and his crew had been living for some time past, no island whatever, as I have before stated, had been laid down in the charts. These merely stated, "Dangerous reefs are supposed to exist about here," which of itself would deter any vessels from coming into this neighbourhood if they knew it.

As there were no roads, nor any means of carriage by beasts, Fitz and his men were each obliged to bear a knapsack. His cabin-boy assisted him in carrying some necessary instruments, such as a spying-glass, quadrant, &c. As Fitz hoped to be absent only four days, he took with him the Portuguese, who now began very fairly to understand the corrupt kind of Arabic spoken on the island, and could make himself well understood. Besides the cabin-boy, four seamen accompanied Fitzjohn. They carried with them fire-arms and cutlasses, and twenty-four rounds of ball-cart-ridge. Gentleman Jack had a double-barrelled fowling-piece, and brought in his train about twenty sets of brace-lets, made from polished copper, and iron hoops, which the armourer had made to catch and fasten with a moveable rivet.

In the knapsacks of the party were two days' boiled pork, and some boiled rice and biscuit. Finally, Fitz determined to begin his march in the afternoon, and his pocket-compass directed them on their road. When they had proceeded three or four miles into the country, some of the natives brought them a small kid well roasted, but quite cold.

For the first night, Fitz determined to sleep in the trees, one of the men taking it by turns to watch at the foot of their lofty bivouac, while, as soon as it was daylight in the morning, they were once more fairly *en route*, and, as Fitz had looped up the side of their round hats like the Swedish soldiers, they had an air *militaire*. About nine o'clock, when they were within four miles of the desired hill, a very old man, with a particularly grey beard, and grey woolly head, suddenly stood before them, and, as no one saw from whence he came, they might have almost, though not quite, supposed him to have dropped from the clouds.

He held in his grasp a long-handled instrument, like one of our farmer's spuds, with which they cut up weeds; but, instead of iron, it had at the end a large piece of bone, about the breadth of four of our fingers. As this strange figure placed itself directly in the path of our travellers, Fitz was not certain what kind of a reception he intended giving them. His *linkister*, as the Portuguese used to call himself, could not make head or tail of what the newcomer said, on account, as the linkister said, of some impediment in the old man's speech; but as he kept constantly moving his two extended hands within eight inches of each side of his head, they found out that he inquired respecting the person who had worn the gold-laced hat on the king's birthday.

On this, the linkister, as I shall call him in future, pointed out Gentleman Jack, upon which the old man went down on his knees in an attitude of supplication; but Fitz having decorated his right wrist with a broad copper bracelet, he immediately got up and betokened him to follow his reverence alone.

This Fitz determined at first *not* to do, but the old fellow pulling him forward by his left arm, and making signs to his men not to follow, he took our hero round two immense trees, about ten yards distant, astern of them, there being a low natural hedge, some two feet high. Behind the hedge appeared a hole in the side of the hill, which my old gentleman, "all accoutred as he was," did quickly enter with ease.

Before Fitz, however, followed his example, he took the liberty of telling his men not to lose sight of him, and as they all had whistles in case of losing each other in the woods, Fitz desired them to force themselves into "the hole in the wall," if he should whistle but once, cost what it would; but if he whistled twice or three times, then they were to understand that he was perfectly safe, and not in need of their society.

Thus protected, Fitz got into this queer kind of habitation, which he did with great difficulty, from having his warlike arms and accoutrements belted round him. The task once accomplished, he found himself in a spacious cave, with more than twenty persons in it. At the upper end sat the queen upon the trunk of a tree curiously carved; she at once beckoned Gentleman Jack to advance, which he imme-

diately did, and seated himself on some dried leaves, about ankle deep, which were spread behind and on either side of her, and which gave out a slight, but very pleasing, aromatic odour.

After Fitz had been in the cave for some time, he observed that the light found its way in from two large slanting and diagonally cut holes above, and on each side of the walls. Our hero very quickly found himself at his ease, and crawling therefore towards the entrance by which he had entered, he whistled three times as a signal to his men that he was perfectly safe.

He had now time to take a careful survey of her majesty, whose name he had learnt to be Shandaree, Queen of the Island of Ragotum. Her figure, if I were to speak poetically, would be termed voluptuous—if familiarly, would be denominated squat. She was about twenty-three years of age—in plain English, she was rather inclined to be corpulent. Her skin, I must admit to have been most beautifully black and glossy, the latter attraction having been conferred on it by the magnificent quantity of tallow candle—no, I meant to say cocoa-nut oil—with which she was constantly in the habit of anointing herself. Her hair was also of a most lovely woolly kind; her lips sublimely thick, her teeth most exquisitely white, her nose squat, open as an alderman's mouth at the nostrils, and flat as the *Ægean* in a calm. In the hind part of her head-dress were inserted two feathers, stuck athwart ships, *à la maccaroni*, while round her neck were Fitz's uniform buttons, rather dingy from being constantly worn. Of the lower part of her majesty's dress, the less I say perhaps the better, it appearing to be the royal fashion of the Queen of Ragotum to wear nothing below the necklace, except a piece of sea-otter skin, about the size of a freemason's apron, the sight of which, it must be confessed, gave Fitz a very distinct idea respecting the propriety of the celebrated regal motto—*Honi soit qui mal y pense*.

As Gentleman Jack soon observed that her Majesty had on her arms none of his matchless bracelets, he, like a true proprietor of a patent invention, begged permission to have the honour of clasping a pair upon her well-proportioned limbs, at the same time recommending that none but her majesty should be allowed to wear them on *each* wrist. While in the act of paying her majesty this honour, her

eyes kept glancing on the ivory whistle which hung from his neck, and which he had taken from his double-barrelled gun-case. She made a sign that she wished to examine this more minutely.

On this he slipped the green silk from over his head, and, on her putting the whistle to her lips, she involuntarily blew into it. No sooner had she done so than, like the scene with Roderic Dhu, in came all the followers of its owner—it being the appointed signal of one whistle, the singular number being chosen by Fitzjohn to signify alarm, because, as he knew, that in case of attack he could always whistle once, but it might occur that he could not gain a second opportunity.

However, Shandaree and her attendants seemed not a little alarmed at this sudden appearance of the armed men, and Fitz could only explain the matter to her majesty by sending them out again, and whistling distinctly twice, and afterwards three times—no one appearing; but on the instant of his making one distinct and continued screaming kind of whistle, in they came as before.

By this means he at length made her understand how she had unintentionally called them, and she was perfectly satisfied.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As Gentleman Jack had often seen brought down to the fort, as the sailors named their habitation, living fowls, and fowls with their skins removed, but never plucked fowls, this made him incline to suspect that the gentle islanders were cannibals. At a dinner, however, which was given by Shandaree to him, and to his men, everything was baked; and he found afterwards that they dug a hole in the earth, and after burning a quantity of dried wood in it, they, as soon as the flame and smoke were extinguished, put in the kid, and covering it over, it was baked deliciously; and, besides this, he had frequent opportunities of satisfying himself that they never tasted fish, fowl, or meat, that had not been cooked, and therefore he felt himself more happy, not to say secure, than he ever could have been amongst cannibals, who are by so much the more ferocious.

After the conclusion of the repast, given to him by her majesty in her regal cave, Fitz proceeded to the hill, distant between two or three miles, for which purpose he was furnished with a guide.

A circumstance here occurred, which shows how necessary it is, that every traveller should know how to sketch and draw animals. It was by this means chiefly that Fitz made himself on many occasions understood, notwithstanding his boasted linkister. For instance, at this juncture, he wanted to procure a bullock. The linkister pretended to ask for it, making a kind of bellowing noise, as much like a lion or bear, as a bullock; but when Fitz drew the animal on his slate, it was immediately recognised, and he was given to understand, that on his return from the hill he should find one at the cave.

At the hill, then, our party arrived in about an hour; and on climbing up it, and taking his spying-glass, Fitzjohn discovered nothing but breakers as far as the glass could carry the eye; and as the south-west monsoon blew very strong, no boat that they had would have lived through them.

On turning his glass inland, Fitz observed another hill, which appeared still higher than the one on which he stood, and very well wooded; whereas, around him the trees were stunted, with their heads bending to the north-east, which showed that the prevailing and strongest winds were from the south-west.

After pausing to reflect for a few moments, Fitz determined to erect a signal staff where he stood, and build a mud-hut, keeping an ensign flying by day, with the union downwards. He resolved also, if possible, to get one of the six-pounders up to the same spot, there to fire it if by any accident a vessel hove in sight.

At that moment it appeared a work of fruitless labour, and an utter impossibility, to attempt bringing the gun to the point desired. With no roads, and scarcely a footpath through the jungle, John Blacky passed much better than themselves, for, having no shoes, his toes helped him to get up the slippery hillocks, whilst the seamen's shoes made them slide back; but this they were not likely to complain of much longer, as even Gentleman Jack himself, or, as the sailors had named him, the king of the Ragged Island—

even his royal self had on at this moment the last pair, and these most considerably out at the toes.

On the whole, poor Fitz returned back very pensive and thoughtful, and, as he had never seen a hut in the island, he thought he could scarcely say that his lines had fallen on pleasant places, since they marked out his abode among a people, who like the ants, lived, as he believed, in holes in the earth. This supposition he, on inquiry, found to be the case. On the return of Fitz to the cave royal, he found a bull, as had been promised, but of so small a size, that he despaired of making any further use of it, than that of turning him into beef, which certainly would not greatly have advanced the progress of his gun up the hill—to say nothing of his being so wild and vicious, that Fitzjohn's whole guard could not manage him.

The price of this beast was twelve large fish-hooks, such as we use to take cod on the banks of Newfoundland. As there seemed to be no chance of reaching the fort that night, and as the bull was quite unmanageable to the seamen, Fitz pretended he had only six hooks with him, and would pay the other six if the natives would accompany him the next morning. To this they readily agreed, and Fitz was shown down into Shandaree's dwelling again, where he was presented with bananas and cocoa-nut milk.

As night approached, our hero inquired for a light, but, to his astonishment, found that the islanders never made use of any, not being able to burn the cocoa-nut oil for want of cotton, and being in ignorance of the many other substitutes which answer the same end. The night and day being nearly equal in these latitudes, it was therefore quite dark at eight o'clock, and Fitz retired to rest upon a delicious bed of dried leaves, in a small recess which formed part of Shandaree's dwelling; previously to which he had taken his knapsack for a pillow, and laid aside his coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth. His fire-arms he took the liberty of keeping by his side. He now soon fell asleep, and awoke long before daylight, his head and face swollen, as far as he could feel by the touch, to double their natural size, and his hands and chest bitten all over by innumerable swarms of musquitoes.

As soon as day broke, Shandaree brought him a large cocoa-nut shell full of warm goat's milk, some wild honey, and some fresh-gathered bananas, which had even the dew on

them at that moment ; but when she saw his face, she stepped back with perfect horror. Being unable to explain to her the cause, and not having his slate to draw the musquito, Fitz imitated the buzzing noise made by that most abominable fly just before he settles and stings. This Shandaree immediately understood, and returned in a few minutes, with some kind of ointment, which she rubbed over him with her hands, and Fitz felt much relieved from the burning heat.

Breakfast being quickly despatched, Fitz and his party were soon on their road with two blackies, who managed the bull in the course of a few seconds—they steering him by the tail, to which pilotage the creature was evidently well accustomed. To them this seemed a matter of the greatest ease.

On arriving with the bull at the fort, Fitz had him tied to one of the six-pounders, as a safe mooring ; and having paid the other six fish-hooks to the conductors, they took their leave, giving Gentleman Jack to understand, that they could procure as many oxen as might be wanted, which Fitz was delighted to hear, for hitherto he had seen nothing but goats and fowls.

The bull, however, who was so quiet with blacky, would not allow any of the seamen to approach him, and Fitzjohn going near him with a handful of grass, whilst the men were at dinner, he capsized his revered majesty, the king of the Ragged Island, in a crack ; and had it not been for the sentinel, the queen would certainly have had to elect another consort-royal.

As hunger, we know, will tame any animal, Fitz forthwith determined to keep John Bull, as the sailors called him, upon *low diet* until he became more manageable. On the next evening, about half an hour before sunset, Fitz had an unexpected visit from the queen, attended only by her lord chamberlain, old grey-beard, the old codger whom he had met in the wood—his first conductor to the habitation of his princess.

As the way to be respected in life is to show respect to others, the moment the sentinel announced her majesty's approach, Fitz ran into the cabin to put on his uniform-coat, cocked-hat, and sword ; but before he could toggle the fronts of his coat together, Shandaree had got inside the

canvas-screen, and did all she could to prevent his putting on his hat. This, he understood afterwards, arose from her fears that his taking it off again would set the cannon firing.

Shandaree and the old fellow pretty quickly showed their intention of making themselves comfortable, and seemed inclined to stay all night. Being at this time short of candles and oil, Fitz only allowed one light to be burnt, and that was for the use of the sentinel. He generally, therefore, turned into his bed by eight o'clock. His men also were by this hour almost invariably asleep, their hammocks being hung in the boat-house, not only from its space, but from this measure tending towards the security of the boats, which formed Fitzjohn's only hope of returning back to the world.

The range of hammocks had been suspended in the boat-house, about two feet from the ground, their lanyards being secured round two studding-sail booms, separated from each other by about the length of the boats. Fitzjohn having, on the evening in question, given his two guests a glass or two of the Cape wine each, they seemed to be very merry, and to have decided on taking in their moorings for the night.

In order to accommodate them in this freak, he took a small lantern in his hand, and went to the boat-house, to order a dry sail to be brought into his cabin. By accident our hero happened to pass in his way the second mate's cot, when, greatly to his surprise and amusement, he discovered a black curly-head just peeping out above the blanket, by the side of the sleeping mate.

"Holloa," said Fitz to himself, "I wasn't aware, Mr. Mate, that you were a family man!—the fellow's made some clandestine marriage, I suppose."

On looking, however, along the tier of hammocks, he found them all in much the same predicament—a little curly black head here, and a little curly black head there—in short, a regular row of them—all clandestine marriages: and this without the rascals being able either to speak the language, or to draw on the slate. Well, thought Gentleman Jack, it's too late now, certainly, to forbid the banns: and, in truth, for such a proceeding to have had any effect, it should have taken place the first day after their arrival on

the island. On the whole, this affair was so characteristic of Jack Tar, that he could not but laugh most heartily.

When Fitz returned into the cabin, he found the old fellow and the queen all astonishment at viewing themselves in a piece of broken looking-glass, which Gentleman Jack had hung up to assist him in shaving, and which they could not understand, notwithstanding they continued to put their hands behind it, to feel for their second selves.

Being quite worn out with fatigue, Fitz sat down in a large arm-chair, and soon fell asleep; and his guests suited themselves at their leisure on the floor, Fitz having taken his bedding out of his sea-cot for the queen, and on which he found her majesty fast asleep at daylight, while the old fadladeen was coiled up in a corner of the cabin.

After the view which Fitzjohn had gained of the extent to which the breakers surrounded that part of the island, he began to be very anxious to see the other side of it; more particularly as they gave him to understand, that there were the remains of a wreck on the eastern side, that had come close in to the land, though no one living could recollect the time of her being lost, so that he could get no details.

Meanwhile, the seamen continued to behave most admirably, and the natives to be particularly respectful and peaceably inclined. Only one article was ever missed; namely, an old studding-sail boom iron, from the quarter of the foreyard; and even whether this had been stolen, Fitz could never ascertain.

Hunger had now made the bull tolerably tame, so that he fed without difficulty from the hand of an European; still Fitz had not as yet dared to loosen him from the six-pounder to which he had first been lashed.

As Fitz wanted to lose no time in making use of the animal to carry the baggage upon his projected expedition, he hung, by beackets from his horns, a shallow board before his eyes, and having made four ropes, or gilguys, fast round his head, led him morning and evening to eat and drink. The old chamberlain finding out Fitzjohn's object, gave him to understand, that when the natives used these bullocks for the purpose of draught, they invariably, and very humanely, put out their eyes with the sharp end of a fishbone; and lashing them to a tree, thrashed them until they tore their own horns out by the roots, as otherwise

they could not pass through the jungle—he, my lord chamberlain, tenderly offering to do both for our hero, in consideration of receiving a fishing-hook.

But Gentleman Jack would consent to neither of these modes of civilising the poor animal. The carpenter sawed off his horns so close to his head, that only two pegs were left, as it were, to support the beackets by which the blinding-board was suspended, and in about a week they fancied him tame enough to begin their march.

Having procured a guide from the queen, whose visits became rather troublesome from their frequency, Fitz and his party started at daylight on Monday morning, the 14th of September—himself, taking with him the linkister, six seamen, and the cabin-boy—a fortnight's biscuit, at two-thirds allowance, or six men quartered on the rations of four, six gallons of wine in two goat skins, eight four-pound pieces of pork ready dressed, sixty rounds of ball-cartridges for each man, two bottles of spirits, a quadrant, a St. George's ensign, and various small objects, so that the pony, as the tars named the bull, was tolerably well loaded.

Having made a kind of halter round the beast's head, and given him what the sailors called a bob-stay, tied from under his throat to just above his knee, the result was, that whenever he moved his knee, his head was obliged to have the same motion, but anything was better than depriving the animal of his sight.

As the party were on the point of starting, the armourer declared that he could easily put a ring through the cartilage of the nose; but as the guide and all the other arrangements were ready, Fitz decided upon trying the animal as he was, intending to purchase and bring home another, so that by the strength of two, he had some hopes of dragging the six-pounder to its station.

Fitzjohn was, however, anxious to visit the wreck first, and take the second hill on his return; on this plan he decided, and wished, if possible, to have gone along the seashore, since the wind being at that period in the south-west quarter, they could have coasted to the northward without being exposed to the weather.

But at this proposal the guide shook his head, and seemed to object so decidedly, that Fitz thought it best to let him go his own way. Accordingly, off they set; the pony car-

ried his burthen extremely well, and went along so quickly, that after two or three hours' travelling through the jungle, which was very fatiguing, and after seeing that the creature had nearly fallen down several times, Fitzjohn consented to have the board taken from his eyes, taking the precaution, at the same time, of having the ropes from the stumps of his horns held by four of the strongest men.

After the board had been removed a few seconds, the bull shook his head violently, and off came the halter. The bob-stay was now rendered useless, and the animal would have shaken off the tiller ropes, had they not have passed a turn round his neck. On this he hoisted his peek, as the sailors called his tail, and notwithstanding they all held fast, he would inevitably have run on board some of them, had they not got a turn of the rope round a tree, and getting the slack taken in, so brought his head to the bitts, until they rigged him out with the board as before.

These animals, in the Island of Ragotum, were very scarce, and ran wild in the woods; and as the natives never eat their flesh, were seldom molested. As Fitzjohn could not satisfactorily ascertain whether there were venomous reptiles, or any of the fierce wild beasts, in the Ragotum natural history, they all slept in trees, except the man on the watch and the guide. This was taking the safe side of the question; and they also took the precaution of lashing themselves to the tree, lest they should fall from the branches on which each had perched himself.

In these bivouacs they observed that blacky always sat down on the earth, near a tree, that he might rest his back against it, and appeared to sleep very comfortably. On an average they did not make more than four English miles a day, owing to the jungle and forest; lying-by always from eleven to three, so that it was not until the evening of the eighth day that they reached the remainder of the wreck.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON gaining the wreck our party found, after all their trouble, nothing left of the vessel but her stem, twelve of her lower timbers, and part of her sternpost, not in a straight line from the stem, but at such a distance from it,

that it was evident she had broken in halves. There still remained the fragments of her figure-head, a lion, with distended jaws, bearing a crown, and sitting upright. This, to the best of Fitzjohn's comprehension, evidently showed she had been a Dutch East Indiaman, of considerable burthen. That part, however, out of the water, had become as rotten as touchwood, so that she might have been wrecked a century ago; and during the whole time he remained on the island it was in vain that he endeavoured to get any account of her.

On the beach were four or five catamarans, nearly as large again as those used on the other side of the island for fishing, which made Fitz conclude the water was deepest on this shore, but still not a canoe was on the island; indeed, the trees were not large enough to make them; and, excepting two or three half rust-eaten bolts, which no doubt came from the Dutch wreck, Fitz never saw any iron, but what they got from him. Neither had they any warlike instruments, which clearly proved that they had enjoyed very little of the blessings of being visited by strangers.

Than these simple islanders none could lead a more inoffensive life: though they were a heavy, stupid people, yet they abounded in good-nature, and fed chiefly on vegetables, which tended, no doubt, to prevent the malicious passions from being very violently excited. Having stayed on this beach for two days, and very often fancied that they saw a sail on the horizon, straining their sight until tears came into their eyes, Fitzjohn and his party moved quietly on towards the second hill, as they called it, or the Dromedary's Humps, as it was afterwards named, from the upper part of it exactly resembling such a form.

On the fourth evening, our adventurers had reached the foot of the ascent, and had gained the summit before the sun had risen: but here all their hopes again seemed blasted; the seaward of that side of the island was, like the other, surrounded with reefs of rocks, and the sea appeared to beat heavier over them, than over the reefs on the southwest side. There were, however, three tolerably tall trees on the summit of the humps; the tops nearly touched, although their roots were far asunder: thus growing like a triangle for hoisting weights.

After a very careful survey of the sea and horizon Gentle-

man Jack ordered his men to cut down a small tree, and make a flag-staff of it; then putting it inside the heads of the three trees, and lashing them all together, they lopped away the superfluous boughs, and hoisted a St. George's ensign, union downwards.

Here Fitzjohn thought it advisable to remain for some days, fearing the country-people, from ignorance, might tear it to pieces; and it was fortunate that he did so; for the ensign being visible from two-thirds of the island, for the next three days almost all the population came to see it, and amongst the rest the queen and her attendants. As this was a good opportunity, Fitzjohn requested her majesty to taboo several yards around the tri-staff—this religious ceremony being quite effectual in preventing any one from attempting to approach it.

Shandaree having complied with this request of Gentleman Jack, she very kindly invited him to spend some days at her grotto, on his way to the fort, promising to return the visit for as long a time as he stayed with her. This Fitz joyfully accepted, as he soon discovered that without her permission he could get nothing. The first thing he asked of her, was to point out a trustworthy native to stay near the flag, and should he see any ship or boat in the offing, to send some one to Fitz, while should any white man come on shore, to show him a bottle which our hero had hung on the tree, bearing outside a label—"This bottle to be broken by the first white man that finds it."

On the inside of this precious archive, Fitz had written a note in three languages,—English, French, and Portuguese,—“Follow the bearer, who watches at the signal-post: he will conduct you to some countrymen, who will joyfully receive and assist you. Be not suspicious, for you have no cause.” Having made all these arrangements, Fitz was glad to hasten to his bed of leaves,—for acting the bird in the tree, and going to roost every night, is not pleasant.

The *pony* now began to knock up, and all hands of the party to be dreadfully fatigued, when they reached the queen's grotto on the fourth night. As the ball of Gentleman Jack's great toe overlapped the sole of his shoe,—having long before made an opening for itself through the upper leather, Fitz felt considerable uneasiness in tramping

it. He had therefore made up his mind to have the *pony* broken in for carrying him.

The queen, on seeing him make his appearance, received him most kindly; and, in presence of the whole of her majesty's court, tattooed his right arm; which honour he was told, and well knew, he should carry to his grave, though it may well be argued that it won't be much use to him there. Previous to our hero's going to rest, he had his face and neck rubbed by her gracious majesty with some unctuous composition, which effectually kept the mosquitoes at bay.

On the return of Gentleman Jack to the fort, he learnt that during his absence all had gone on well. Finding it indispensable to have another officer, and being determined to select him without favour or affection, Fitz, after due and mature consideration, wrote down the names of four of the most deserving men, and putting the papers containing these into a bag, he made the first mate draw out a name, without his knowing for what purpose. By this means, the promotion fell on the man who had so nearly escaped being flogged; but, as his name had come up, Fitz dubbed him third mate, in presence of the whole of the crew, and gave him a written order to that effect, which, if he had been obliged to flog him, he could not have done.

Fitz now found the greatest convenience from having had all the crew taught to read and write,—for, exclusive of the loss of time which occurs in Jack taking orders to Tom to read, they found an amusement in their leisure hours in reading; and, by this time, every one could take the altitude of the sun, and work the day's work. Soldiers of each regiment are taught to read and write, and nothing but ignorant prejudice prevents our sailors from having the same benefit.

As nothing could be done towards departing from the island, until the abatement of the south-west monsoon, which could not arrive for a month at least, the principal object of Fitzjohn, in the meantime, was to get a six-pounder to the Dromedary Humps, where the flag was flying: and one to the *Cocoa-tree Station*, as they called the lesser hill.

Another bull having been brought down to the fort, during Fitzjohn's absence, he had little difficulty in taming

him to carry, but could only succeed in making the two animals draw when separate; for, no sooner did they approach each other, than they began fighting, and yet neither was bigger than a jackass, at the most.

The armourer having made two rings, one for each nozzle, Fitz found, that as they would not open like a lady's earring, it was next to impossible to secure them through the cartilage of the nose. As to soldering them when through, as the armourer had proposed, the wildness of the animals forbade all hopes of succeeding in such a project: they were, therefore, obliged to sprit-sail-yard them, by putting a lengthened pump-bolt through the cartilage, and working a grummet, or ropen ring, over the upper part of the nose, —care being taken not to impede the animal's breathing. By means of this contrivance, they could lead about, otherwise ferocious, bulls, like lambs.

At last, the happy day arrived when Fitzjohn's party fairly tackled their oxen to the mounted gun, and setting forth on their march, made a progress of about three-quarters of a mile in the day. Dreadfully slow as was this rate of journeying, even then the men and beasts were so exhausted, and the footpath was so intricate, that they were obliged to abandon all hopes of succeeding by such a method.

Fitz now hit on another mode, and spliced two four-inch hawsers together, extending them from one tree as far as they would reach, to another. These trees being supported by a couple of good backstays, the seamen managed to bouse the hawsers so taut, that the gun, which was slung wheels uppermost, just kept off the ground, and being lashed above, to the ring of a stout grapnel which traversed the hawsers, they easily drew the gun and carriage the whole length of the line, steering the heavy mass between the trees as occasion required. Thus, in nine days' time, they reached the foot of the *Cocoa-tree Station* hill.

Fitz now found it would be necessary to build a hut close to the signal-staff, so that the look-out man might sleep in it. The ponies were, therefore, employed in carrying the materials up the hill, while the natives scarcely took any notice of what they were doing, and, indeed, regarded them with the most perfect toleration, if not indifference,

until the mud-hut was built, when all who could walk came to look at it, to wonder and admire.

It was a common square and oblong-built hut, with a large place for a window at each end, and the north-east and south-west sides opening with a kind of coach-house door, —so that as the monsoon blew, the look-out man could let in or exclude the air as he liked, and would always have an eye to windward, as it was only from that quarter any assistance could come.

The gun being at last got into his place, and twelve pounds of powder lodged at the station, with plenty of wads with which it might be well rammed home, Fitz collected together a stack of half-dry bushes, which would not burn, but when fired would create a considerable smoke. He then requested the queen to have the place tabooed, as she had already done on the Dromedary's Hump, and accordingly, she and her retinue came up one evening for that purpose.

As Gentleman Jack had always through life considered it necessary to pay great respect to the religious ceremonies of any country in which he stayed, he had determined to have, before the ceremony was performed, the little feast he had prepared for the royal retinue, considering that it would be better that all mirth and gaiety should be previously finished. Fitz also decided to salute her majesty with three discharges of the gun on her arrival, and three on her departure.

His crew, excepting the three left at the fort, were all with him, and under arms; and Fitz was ready, in his full uniform and gold-laced scraper, to receive the queen and her attendants. When fairly up the hill, and before entering the hut, he made the usual signal by taking off his hat, and the gun was fired three times, to the great amusement of them all.

After the repast, and the usual quantity of wine, which her majesty always seemed very greatly to enjoy, she expressed a strong desire to have the cocked-hat upon her own head, with which he immediately crowned her, putting it on square. On receiving this ready compliance with her wishes she seemed greatly pleased: and Fitz, the more to heighten the effect, told the gunner, when she pulled it off, to fire the other three guns.

After strutting about with it for some time, her most gracious majesty condescended to imitate Gentleman Jack by taking off this symbol of his rank; and, the guns being fired at the moment, the astonishment they expressed was beyond all bounds. The ground being tabooed, the whole party descended from the hill. As the sailors had taught the ponies to carry, Fitz mounted one to get to the fort; and her majesty threw out broad hints that she should like to mount the other. This, however, he did not encourage.

CHAPTER XX.

THE difficulties which Fitzjohn had been obliged to surmount in equipping and arming the Cocoa-tree Station, made him almost despair of similarly preparing the Dromedary Humps; but, as the accomplishing this end was not so pressing, and the south-west monsoon had nearly expended itself and become quite moderate, Fitz determined to despatch two parties to explore the sea-coasts around the island by the boats. At first, he thought of sending one each way to meet on the opposite side; but knowing what confidence two parties inspire in each other, he decided that they should go together; retaining the long-boat at the fort as their only hope of deliverance.

This decided, they launched the pinnace and the jolly-boat, and let them remain full of water for two days, that they might absorb the moisture, and become water-tight. On the fourth morning they started; the chief mate and six men in the pinnace, and the third mate and four men in the jolly-boat, with six days' provisions and water.

On the third evening, the expedition suddenly returned, having found it quite impossible to get outside the reefs, or alongshore, for the breakers and sunken rocks, while the sharks were so numerous and so voracious, that they endeavoured to sever the blades of the oars; and more than once the men were obliged to fire musketry at them.

Gentleman Jack now most seriously reflected on the position in which himself and men were placed: their biscuit they had long ceased to serve out, having only about one month's allowance left: their salt provisions were equally low; and the men could not live as the natives did, without being attacked with dysentery. Their short allowance of flour

served out to them was indispensably necessary to eat with the fruit, and ward off those attacks. Under these circumstances, Fitzjohn directed all the exertions of himself and crew towards preparing for sea.

The first grand object was to render the boats so buoyant that even if part of their bottoms should be stove in on passing the reefs, they should still be, as far as possible, seaworthy. For this purpose, empty barricoes, well bunged and stopped, were lashed down to the ringbolts in the stem, as well as on each side of the keel, in the bottom of the boat. Besides these were also employed in a similar manner, and at different parts, breakers half full of fresh water, slung two and two, like smugglers' kegs.

The long-boat was fitted after the same plan as the others, only that under her bow and quarter were four airtight quarter-casks; and, as Fitz intended to take her in tow, he had put into her all that was not essentially necessary; and, as Jack Tar must have his joke, though life or death were momentarily pending, the seamen christened this "the waggon." Two days previously to Fitzjohn's intended departure, he spiked the guns by driving round files into the touch-hole, and breaking them off, while inside he placed bottles, each containing a short history of what had happened to him, the names of himself and crew, the day of their arrival and departure. Over these he put in two wads, and one round shot, and then wads again to the muzzles; having buried a bottle, with a similar account, at the foot of the Cocoa-tree flag-staff. He then invited the queen and her attendants to supper, and explained to her his intentions of departure, requesting her, at the same time, to accept the cocked-hat, the piece of looking-glass, and the tamed bullocks. He also begged of her to taboo, round the fort, all the land they had purchased until their return, which might be in a moon or two.

Her gracious Majesty, on hearing that she was to lose her European lover, evinced great grief; and, at dusk, in the utmost agitation, went away with tears in her eyes, not forgetting by the way to take the cocked-hat. Slight and broken was the sleep that visited the anxious pillow of Fitzjohn, assailed as he was by fears that some important matter might have been forgotten.

Soon after daylight, he observed the men gathered *to-ge-*

ther in a circle, and not stirring themselves willingly. He at once called two or three to him by name, and inquired the reason of their seeming dilatoriness. To his great astonishment, thirteen, including all the three mates, plainly told him that they preferred remaining where they were, so that there were only Gentleman Jack, four men, and the two boys, at all willing to depart.

As Fitz had always, in any dilemma, tried fair means before resorting to force, having always found this conduct the readiest channel to success, and as he was completely in their power, not only as to his own person, but the boats, which were moored to the still unsunk bow of the ship, he calmly reasoned with them upon the folly of spending their lives on a savage island, since, when old age overtook them, and they could not assist each other, they would not fail to repent being absent from their country and their homes, not to mention the loss of their well-earned pay.

To these arguments they also very justly replied, that no benefit could accrue to them by joining a King's ship again, since whilst they had strength and constitution left, they were certain of being kept in India. At this period of the war, as I had occasion to remark in a previous chapter, a King's ship went to India upon a five years' station. The whole of the officers, either by promotion, permission, or a sick leave, were sure of finding their way back to Europe, and very often the ship herself; but not so the crew, who were drafted from ship to ship, like so many animals, as long as they were worth the trouble. In peace, this is not the case; but, should we ever again be involved in a long war, until the seaman can return to his country and his home, as the officer is permitted to do, this will always remain a great and just ground of complaint against the British naval service, and one of the causes why we are obliged to have recourse to the most brutal force, in order that its vessels may be manned.

Wishing to gain time for reflection, Fitzjohn, in the present instance, left his men in doubt as to what steps he should pursue, telling them to take until sunset to consider the matter. In the evening, a deputation of the three mates came, and asked if the crew could take their squaws, or black wives, with them, as it appeared they were all in a way "which ladies wish to be who love their lords."

On hearing this request all Fitzjohn's gravity and vexa-

tion were insufficient to suppress a momentary smile. He then told the mates that he feared this was totally impossible, as the size of the boats would not admit of such numbers. Finally, however, he compromised the request, by assuring them, that as soon as they made a ship, or an European settlement, those who did not like to remain, should, as far as it depended on him, have the boats and return to the island. To this they cheerfully assented, and, on the next morning, at seven o'clock, after having been eight months and four days on the island of Ragotum, Gentleman Jack had the melancholy pleasure—for he was not without his regrets at leaving this innocent shore—of once more embarking his men safely in their boats.

The beach was, as it may be supposed, crowded with spectators ; and, foremost amongst the rest, the queen, with her gold-laced hat. Two small catamarans accompanied the boats to the edge of the inner reef, but would go no further, this being the limit of their fishing-ground.

The morning was delightfully calm, as it had rained all the preceding day and night, and continued to do so, a state of the weather very general at the change of the monsoons. The rain having kept down the surf, the boats got over the two inshore reefs tolerably well, the waggon, as they called the long-boat, having only struck once; but she towed so heavily, that Fitzjohn saw no hopes of getting out to sea that night, and therefore came to a grapnel in three fathoms water, under the lee of a rock which was just awash with the surface of the sea.

Here they lay tolerably quiet all night, and, as soon as it was daylight, they mounted one of the boys on the low mast of the pinnacle to convey them through the broken water. In their progress during the day, they struck severely three or four times, but by night had got so far from the island, that the heads of the cocoa-nut trees around the *fort* were even with the water-line; still, there were spots of broken water outside of them, where the sea ran rather high.

To avoid the inconvenience of this, Fitz lashed the spare spars with a bridle of some fathoms long, and attached to the bight of it, a small grapnel, which kept the spars in place, and broke the sea ; and, on the whole being launched overboard, the spars were thus secured, and serving as a rough kind of breakwater, Fitzjohn then brought up with

the long-boat's grapnel, in seven fathoms water, and made each boat besides drop its own grapnel under foot.

Before leaving the island, our hero had taken the precaution of having deep tarpaulin washboards fitted to the bows and sterns of the boats; they now, therefore, shipped little or no water, and the next day stood fairly out to sea. Just as they were losing sight of the higher parts of the island, they observed a very thick smoke to arise, which Fitzjohn did not doubt to be the furze stack fired, but whether by accident, or to make known a sail in sight, it was impossible to decide.

Scarcely had this surmise arisen when Fitzjohn easily perceived that the inclination amongst his men was to *return and inquire* into its truth, but he soon put a stop to all thoughts of that kind, by cutting adrift the empty quarter casks under the long-boat's quarters, and getting her under sail.

After having been five days under weigh, and all the time wet through from those heavy tropical rains, against which they had no other resource than that of taking off their wet clothes, wringing them out, and putting them on again, many of the men began to be sickly, a disaster not mended by the imperfect mode of cooking their live stock, the fire for which purpose was made in a bucket of sand in the midships of the long-boat. Such being the case, Fitz decided on keeping the remainder, consisting of one sheep and five fowls, for the sick list.

As all the boats kept in tow of each other with double painters, bow and quarter, they were obliged to keep the sails two points from the wind, but never made more than four knots an hour. During the intervals of the pouring rains, the sun came out burning hot, which gave them all the ague. On the nineteenth day after leaving the land, poor Billy, the last sheep, was put to death.

From the heat of the weather, they were obliged to tow overboard the part that was not required for cooking, and, as they did not trust all to one line, they made fast some parts to the bow as well as from the quarter: lucky it was they took this precaution, for, during the night, a shark came and took away a whole leg which was towing astern, with the exception of the shank-bone, secured by the tow-rope.

On the twenty-first morning, being in the Mozambique Channel, they observed a sail at a distance, and, as the stranger was standing towards our friends, and they towards the stranger, they neared each other very fast, and, in about two hours, Fitz made out the other to be as large as one of our East India ships, which they sincerely hoped might be the case, knowing the kindness and hospitality of the excellent officers who commanded them.

CHAPTER XXI.

As the strange sail on which the hopes of so many depended was, when first seen, end on by the wind, on the larboard tack, and our hero's boats rather off the wind on the starboard tack, they could just discover the red fly of an ensign, and some main-deck guns, the muzzles of many of which were cocking up at an angle of forty-five degrees, while those of others were as much depressed. They observed also, that they were of different lengths, to the great joy of the men, who then felt certain that the vessel in sight was not a British man-of-war.

They now soon certified themselves of the fact that they were equally the object of the stranger's notice, since she hove, and in a short time our hero and his crew got alongside, when they found she was an Arab ship, which had been purchasing slaves at Madagascar and on the Abyssinian coast. She was as large as one of our sixty-four gun ships, and had on board 1600 slaves, chiefly women.

As Fitz mounted to the deck, he could not help smiling at his costume, having nothing to cover his head but a black silk night-cap and his "south-wester," by which name the seamen call a kind of canvas scull-cap, with a flap behind like the London coal-heavers, and which is much worn in merchant ships in bad weather, as the flap behind keeps the rain out of the neck.

The captain, a renegade Turk, received our friends very kindly, and the chief-mate, the linkister, was here of very great use to them, as this Arab ship was navigated by a Mozambique Portuguese pilot. The captain having hoisted in all Fitzjohn's boats, allotted part of the half-deck to himself and crew. Fitz agreed with him for a certain number

of dollars to be landed at Bombay, or put on board any ship bound there, and when their own provisions should be exhausted, they were to be provided at so much a head; while, on the other hand, it was provided, that if the Arab captain wanted any of Fitzjohn's men to assist in navigating the ship, they were to be fed for nothing, and those who steered were to be paid at the same rate as his own helmsmen, of which Fitz found he had but four.

It may easily be imagined that all hands of the wanderers required rest and quietness, and having obtained this, they soon recovered from their fatigues. The men seemed tolerably happy and very obedient, and Fitz did not hear one word touching their return to the island. One day, on looking over the bows of the ship, Gentleman Jack happened to observe that she had precisely the same kind of grinning lion head, as he had found on the wreck ashore at the island, and he afterwards learned it is the only figure-head the Mussulmans allow to be carried.

From these circumstances, he was led to believe that Ragotum had been peopled by the loss of a ship similarly laden to the one in which they were then embarked; but, on questioning the Portuguese pilot, he had no idea of the existence of any such island, as that part of the sea was rarely, if ever, approached—so true it is, that one-half the world is ignorant of the existence of the other.

In three weeks, the Arab ship was nearly abreast of Bombay, and falling in with a grab from the Red Sea bound to that port, Fitz and his men were put on board of her with everything belonging to him, excepting the long-boat, which he took in tow. On leaving the Arab ship, Fitz gave the captain an order on our government for the passage money, and presented him with his sword, in return for which the skipper very kindly presented him with two of the female slaves, adding, with great delicacy, that if he did not like them, he might select others.

As Fitzjohn, however, only accepted of the poor souls in order to set them free, he was quite satisfied with the two to whom fortune had given the happy lot of being thus chosen. On the fourth evening, after thus parting from the Arab, they made Bombay, and to Fitz' great joy discovered the British men-of-war's pendants flying. Before, however, they got into the harbour, the mates and men, one

and all, came aft, and claimed Fitzjohn's promise of being allowed to return to the island, which he kept by mentioning their wishes on the first possible moment to the commander-in-chief, but to these the latter would by no means accede; Fitzjohn communicated this answer to his men, adding that his power of assistance ceased—to which remark, though murmuring not a little at the disappointment, they were obliged to assent.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN dismissing the subject of the love-stricken mates and seamen in the last chapter, my laudable anxiety for their lacerated feelings induced me to hurry a little in advance of my narration. As a true lover of justice, therefore, let me now take up the last. Fitzjohn, having dismissed his appellants with that promise, both the fact and futility of which we have recorded, resumed with increasing eagerness his inspection of his majesty's vessels at Bombay.

Among the rest, then and there lying, he thought he could perceive one of that nondescript class of line-of-battle ships, jocosely nicknamed by Jack Tar, the Forty Thieves, from forty of them, built by contract, having proved very inferior in point of sailing, and having, it is said, added more to the pocket of the contractor than the good of his majesty's service. The latter being one of those goods, by the bye, which it is always right to consider, when we have no good of our own to claim a previous attention.

One of these said forty thieves was the Rumbly. Now, thought Fitzjohn, if I know anything of the old Rumble-tumble's build, that should be her. But then, where is her commodore's pennant: and hereat being most exceedingly puzzled, and quite at fault, he laid aside his glass, went below to the cabin, and called for a glass of beer.

As for you, my young friends, the cockneys of London, who live under the double blessings of a mixed government, and Perkins and Co.'s entire, you may profanely smile at the luxury of malt; but wait, good gentlemen, till a summer trip to India has enlightened you; and after knowing what it is to have a thermometer at ninety-six in the shade, then

—why then, you'll have a much more adequate idea of bottled stout than at present.

The Grab having come to an anchor, Fitzjohn learnt, with surprise and some concern, that he was right in his conjecture, and that the two-decked ship in question was the Rumbly. Surely, thought he, Sir High Topham can't be dead! and if not dead, what can have made him leave the Rumbly? But one thing's clear—dead or alive, I must go and report myself. So having done the utmost with his person, that a tarpaulin sou-wester hat, and ragged coat and heels, would permit, off set our immortal Gentleman Jack for the Rumbly.

I don't know, Mr. Reader, whether you have ever had the gratification of learning that a rich old uncle has suddenly popped off the hooks, leaving you his heir, and whether, after enjoying this comfortable delusion for some months, you have had the mortification of suddenly seeing him put in his appearance alive and hearty. Have you? If so, you possess a very living idea of the feelings of Gentleman Jack's messmates on seeing him come up the side.

One had got on a pair of his breeches, another was wearing one of his old jackets, a third sporting his spare hat, a fourth had long made a most magnificent appearance by means of a dozen of his best shirts, a fifth was airing all his stockings, a sixth keeping the moths out of his handkerchiefs, and a seventh was stretching his last new pair of boots.

His books had become the cockpit library, his papers part of the public property; every one possessed some memento of his life, and the whole community had benefited by his death; but the devil a soul of the whole of them ever again expected to see Gentleman Jack alive.

Oh, for kindnesses of this description, commend me to a midshipman's mess! There's no little thing of this sort they won't willingly do for you. The manner of conferring benefits is often as material as the benefits themselves, says Blair. Midshipmen, I must add, confer theirs in the noblest way—they never even wait the asking. In the case in question, they all crowded round Gentleman Jack, and by their looks seemed to doubt whether he were not some impostor.

In the energy of his declamation, and just to convince them he was of this world, he clapped one of them on the shoulder, and the other on the head saying, "I'll soon let

you know I'm come amongst you;"—alluding to the wonderful yarns he had to tell, and little dreaming that he was laying violent hands on his own property. Conscience, however, making cowards of them all, caused the first to exclaim, "Oh, by Jove, Fitzjohn! if you allude to your jacket,"—the second, at the same time, chiming in with "D—n it, my dear fellow, you don't mean to take back your hat."

This began to open Gentleman Jack's eyes: he then burst into a hearty laugh, and telling them they were heartily welcome to the little liberties they had taken with his wardrobe, they, in turn, assured him of his being a most generous, good fellow—than the matter of whose death nothing could have grieved them more.

"Why, ay," said Fitz, smiling at their ruddy cheeks, "you look as if you'd been pining greatly for me;—but, talking of deaths, I hope nothing's happened to Sir High, that I don't see his broad pennant."

"Oh, nothing!" responded three in a breath, "only he's nearly been kicking the bucket from an attack of dysentery; so the surgeons bowled him off into the country, for the last three weeks, for a change of hair; but he's expected back to-night."

"Ay, Gentleman Jack, that is just it," said one of the youngsters, quizzing the mis-pronounced word; "and by this time I'll bet that his hair is so *changed*, that it's nothing better than a *whig*."

"Just catch hold of that ere youngster, and break his head; he's always a trying to make game of his senior officers," quoth a voice, which Fitz thought he recognised. Turning his head, he saw Jim Bell slowly emerging from one of the hatchways, and gravely busied, at the same moment, in the very important act of putting a fresh quid of tobacco into his capacious sepulchre of a cheek.

"Ah Jim, my boy, how are you?" exclaimed Fitz.

"Lord have mercy on us! it's his ghost!" muttered Jim, suddenly paling in his mahogany hue, and sinking down on the coamings of the hatchway.

"Ghost! your mother's a ghost, Jim! Don't I look very much like one?—No; when I'm a ghost, old boy, depend on it I'll cut a more respectable figure."

Having taken Jim's hand in his, Fitz got a grip that very soon convinced him Jim Bell was no ghost. whatever he

himself might be; while he saw, from the silent manner of the rough seaman, and the sparkling tell-tale that for a moment rose and glittered in his eye, how to distinguish one who had really felt his supposed loss from those who had merely profited by it. With a heart much lightened, by knowing that Sir High Topham was still his captain, Fitzjohn now made his way to the quarter-deck, and there reported himself.

The news of his return was received by the wardroom officers with equal surprise, though this was differently expressed from that of the midshipmen; and having sent a boat away for Fitzjohn's men, and such effects as Gentleman Jack might still be said to possess, they invited their owner to dine that day in the wardroom, and afford them some of those details which all so eagerly desired to hear.

Many were the jokes cut at Fitzjohn's expense, and that of the queen of Ragotum; but he bore everything with infinite good-humour, too busily engaged with his bottle and his plate, at all to regret the loss of his dusky Calypso.

That evening word came off from ashore, that Sir High Topham had come down from the interior, and would be on board early on the ensuing morning, being, he added, very glad to hear that Mr. Fitzjohn had made his number at last. When Fitzjohn heard this, he thought there was more truth in the old adage respecting rumour, than he had ever before been inclined to believe; and how the news of his arrival could already have reached the shore he could not divine. The next morning Topham came on board, looking very pale, but still worth many dead men, for all that.

He received Fitzjohn with great kindness, laughed heartily at his *outré* appearance, and finally telling him to get into his barge, said that he was going to dine that day with Sir Edward C——, who held a distinguished post on shore, and that he had been requested by his gallant host to take our hero with him.

Having contrived to get back, for the time being, so many of his clothes as would enable him to make shift until some new ones could be made, Gentleman Jack left the ship with Topham. On being introduced to Sir Edward, he found the latter a fine-looking old soldier, a little

stiff, perhaps, in his manner, but yet one who, at pleasure, possessed the valuable art of converting acquaintances into friends.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BESIDES Sir High Topham, and two other naval officers, whose ships were then lying at Bombay, Fitzjohn found himself surrounded by the *élite* of the official personages at the head of the affairs of that Presidency. Everything was in a state of magnificence that proved the truth of those reports which Gentleman Jack had heard, in common with the rest of the world, respecting the luxurious state kept up by our eastern nabobs.

The station assigned to him was, as on the occasion of the port-admiral's dinner, one of honour; for he possessed that sort of devil-may-care, gentlemanly impudence, which is so peculiarly midshipmitish, and which never left him in the back-ground. In this case even I, his faithful historian, feel bound to remark, that the whole of his conduct in the island of Ragotum,—the foresight with which every emergency was met, the natives kept at once submissive and friendly, and his own men preserved in the strictest discipline,—all displayed a judgment and moral courage worthy of the very highest commendation. Though, at the same time, this is saying nothing of the fact of his having thus restored to the service good sailors, the estimated value of each, in India, was to our government at home one hundred pounds sterling.

Return we to the dinner—*revenons aux moutons*.—Fitzjohn was placed on the right hand of Sir Edward, Sir High Topham being on the left. Between our hero and his host, though somewhat retired from the table, a chair was placed expressly for a small, but beautiful spaniel, upon whom the weight of years seemed beginning to press heavily. A servant of colour was placed behind its chair, to watch over its wants; and its owner was not less attentive to his dumb companion than to any of those possessed of the higher faculties and attributes of the human species.

"Well, old boy, you have a pleasant berth of it," soliloquised Fitz, as he looked at the dog, and thought of some

of the days passed at Ragotum, and several and sundry hours of his life, at other times, not very pleasantly devoted,—to wit, to middle watches and boat duties :—"I wonder," continued Fitz, "whether or no there is such a thing as dog destiny ;—otherwise it's rather queer, that of two whelps littered by the same mother, one should be doomed to a life of ill-usage, and, finally, death by flaying alive, for the sake of his skin, in London ; while, for the other, no luxury is too good or great, no life more caressed, no death more gentle and guarded, in Hindostan ?"

One of the first questions asked by Sir Edward of Fitzjohn was, whether the latter had written to his mother, to whose ears there could be little doubt the report of his death must have reached before this. Fitz told him that the first thing after recovering from his fatigue on board the Arab slave ship, was to sit down and write his mother a long account of his wreck, and all subsequent adventures on the island ; where one of the greatest losses he had felt was that of her before most punctual correspondence, and that this letter, so written, he was only now waiting for the packet to send home.

"Bring it to me to-morrow morning, sir," said Sir Edward ; "I am sending home official dispatches to the government, and will engage that it goes safe and speedily. I am glad to hear you were so thoughtful. I once knew a lady, under similar circumstances, who suffered very needlessly from a negligence of this kind. Sir High Topham tells me that the Rumbly is likely to remain here some weeks ; so, perhaps, when you bring your packet of letters to-morrow, you will be prepared to give me the pleasure of your company as long as your ship remains in Bombay : your late fatigues will not, perhaps, have indisposed you to a little of our shore luxury and ease.

Fitzjohn thanked Sir Edward very warmly for this kindness, which for a fortnight he accepted, wondering in his own mind at the unexpected kindness of heart displayed by one whose expression augured more of melancholy and reserve than any other feeling. And yet when Fitzjohn looked again, and watched the smile that played round his gallant friend's features in speaking, and the animation that the effort had temporarily called into his eye, he could not but admit that the stern soldier had something about him

strongly indicative of deep feeling and excessively winning of regard.

Dinner being finished, and the wines placed upon the table, Master Beauty—for so the dog was named—now for the first time rose from his hitherto couchant position, mounted the glittering board, and threading his way very carefully through the crystal maze, first paid his respects to his master, and then, beginning with Fitzjohn, made his round of the guests, as if to display his blood and breeding; after which the black servant received him very carefully, and took him off to his bed, which was in the same room with Sir Edward's, and, like the general's, regularly provided with mosquito curtains, and standing with each leg in a small pail of water, to guard against the scorpions. Fitzjohn was now called upon, as king of the Ragged Island, to go through his wonderful stories for the public benefit of all assembled; and considering the tempting opportunity, he did not, I must confess, draw the long bow very enormously, after all.

The next day, by noon, he made his appearance at Sir Edward's with his letters. The general received him very kindly, showed him into the room which had been set apart for his use, because it commanded the best view of the sea; and recommending Gentleman Jack to take a siesta, left him to his repose.

After three weeks most pleasantly spent by our hero, during which time every passing day served to heighten his esteem for his host, the Rumbly prepared to sail for Madras and Bengal, and from thence to Pulo Penang. Our hero had now completed his re-equipment thoroughly; and taking leave of the kind friend who seemed to have taken such a partiality for him, he repaired on board his ship, then lying at single anchor, and about to sail so soon as Sir High Topham arrived on board. As Sir High had also, for the last week, been staying in Sir Edward's house, he took our hero off in his barge.

The commodore having mounted up the side, Fitz was about to follow, when he espied two wooden packages carefully stowed away under the head-sheets. Thinking he saw something very like his own name on one of them, he made the inquiry, and found himself correct in his surmise: the other was for the commodore, and both from their late

host, containing all the delicacies that Indian preserves, &c., can boast. In Fitz's packet there was, moreover, a letter couched in the kindest terms, and concluding with a request, that should our hero on any sudden emergency be pushed for money, he would draw on the writer.

That evening the *Rumbly* was at sea, and certainly, after all the luxury in which he had lately revelled—the very opposite of the primitive simplicity of *Ragotum*—the roughness of a midshipman's life struck Gentleman Jack rather vividly; he, therefore, with all the plenary authority of a self-elected committee composed of one—"Resolved, that the Admiralty do promote him to the rank of lieutenant so soon as his time and examination be passed." After this, having kept the middle watch, and turned in hard and fast till seven bells, he roused out, breakfasted on salt junk, and then turned out, and made to a new watch and quarter bill, nor troubled his head how the world went, nor where the wind blew him, but singing the while—

"A light heart and a thin pair of breeches
Will go through the world, my brave boys!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FEW days after his majesty's ship the *Rumbly* had put to sea, it came on to blow most violently, and in the middle of the gale a strange sail hove in sight, which turned out to be an East Indiaman, who, recognising the *Rumbly* as an English man-of-war, made the signal of distress. As she was considerably to leeward, the commodore ran down to her, and found she had carried away her main and mizen topmasts. Both ships lay-to during the violence of the gale, and when this had sufficiently abated, Sir High Topham sent a boat on board the stranger to know what assistance he could render. The answer was, that in carrying away her masts, she had lost three and disabled several more of her men, that her bowsprit being sprung, she had great fears for her foremast, and that, finally, if Sir High could lend her a small party of seamen to go as far as Calcutta, he would be conferring a very great benefit on the honourable company and their ship. The answer to this application was certainly one most substantial, and to the

point, since it was nothing less than the sending of Fitzjohn, Jim Bell, and twenty-six seamen, on board the Tigris East Indiaman, with orders to assist her captain in the repairs of the ship, and the conducting her to Calcutta, where they were to wait the Rumbly's arrival.

In the course of half an hour Fitzjohn received his written instructions from Sir High Topham, and himself and party having got all their traps ready, were rowed on board the Tigris, and the two ships set sail on their courses.

The first duty of our friends was that of working hard in repairing the damages of the gale; and as soon as the progress of their labour gave them time to look round, they found the crew of the Tigris to consist of the captain, Mr. Thomas Jessamy, three mates, and ninety-seven men. Besides these, she carried seventeen male and fifteen female passengers.

In order to describe these, we will begin with Captain Jessamy himself. He was the very picture of a sailor-dandy, and as he owned one-half the ship, thought "no mud of himself," as Jim Bell very choicely phrased it. As the passengers recovered from the fright into which they had been thrown by the late hard weather, they gradually mustered around the dinner-table, which was well kept, and plentifully served with all the delicacies that could be supplied.

"I say, Bo'," quoth Jim Bell, sniffing up the odour of dinner on the first day of his arrival; "please the pigs, we've fallen in with plenty of belly timber at last! and not before it's wanted. Hang me if my ribs and trucks an't as spare as a young greyhound's. I've had enough of the starving-jaw commons of a man-of-war for many a day. I don't care how long we hang out in these quarters, and nothing would please me better than if 'twas to come on and blow great guns, knocking us back two knots for every one we make forward."

"Why," replied Fitz, "though I don't exactly wish that, I'm very well contented, and shall be still more so, if, when we go in to dinner, we find one or two pretty girls aboard."

"Oh, as to the gals, Master Gentleman Jack, I leaves them all to you. I finds them all so precious modest, I'm afraid to open my mouth. Give me Gosport for my money.

There natur's natur, and whether you calls for grog or backy, all's vone and the same thing."

Our hero, as officer of the party, of course dined in the cabin every day, while Jim Bell, having been put in charge of a watch, was also frequently invited. On the first day that this happened, after the resuscitation of all the lady passengers, Jessamy, at the appointed hour of dinner, appeared in the dinner-cabin with his short silk stockings, snow-white trowsers, well-cleaned shoes, and stiffened frill, smelling of the finest perfumes.

The passengers were all seated round the dinner-table, when Jim Bell entered. One corner of the collar appertaining to what Jim called a clean chequered shirt, was pulled a little above his black neckcloth, so that it touched his starboard ear. A vacancy for a button at the lower part of the collar revealed a well-bronzed throat. His red waistcoat having been washed in pea-soup,* still bore the remaining trophies of some of the husks on it, these looking like pieces of chopped hay. His best uniform master's-mate's jacket had been stowed in bulk, and displayed as many creases in it as a Jew's clothes-bag. For his trowsers he wore a pair made of number-four canvas, well scrubbed, and fitting taut about the waist. His stockings were of sky-blue worsted, and a large pair of silver buckles rode a-horseback over his instep. In addition to all of which, a thick pair of clean swabbed shoes completed the gang of rigging of Jim Bell.

Jim having carefully stowed away his tarpaulin hat on the breech of one of the cabin-guns, which were run fore and aft to give more room, Jessamy observed, "Mr. Bell, you are rather late at table, we waited for you to join the company in the after-cabin."—"Better late than never," replied Jim; "why the cabin smells like a *parfumer's* shop. I say, Master Jessamy, you've run aboard a musk cat."

"Take your seat there, Mr. Bell, between Miss Jones and Cadet Williams," said Jessamy, pretending not to hear Jim's remarks, though at the same time looking not a little annoyed.

"I say, young soger," says Jim, edging his fat corpus in between the two who were supposed to be attached, "I heard you last night against the bulk-head of this blue-eyed

* On the same principle that laundresses ashore use pearl-ash.

young lady, Miss Jones, palavering away in fine style—making love, I suppose you calls it, but I never spoils sport, so I said nothing, thof, to be sure, I did feel a little curious, having often hard of that same love-making; but I never chanced to fall in with it before. What with the ship's rolling so much, and my not being used to them standing bed-places, I was obliged to turn in all standing, and unrig in dock. I don't do these ere lubberly tricks often, so, as I said before, I hard all, Miss; but Jim never blows any one, much more when there's a bit of fun in the case."

"Mr. Bell, I must call you to order," said Jessamy. "The conversation you have now commenced is one we are not accustomed to at my table, for I can assure you, sir——"

"Come, come, skipper, I meant no harm, so you had better clew up your jawing bags, and give your tongue leave of absence. Now, Miss, a glass of wine, if you please. Jim's no blab, and you may cat-a-wall as much as you like; I'll cram my ears full of oakum next time."

Miss Jones coloured up to the eyes, and the cadet looked daggers at Jim; but a glass of wine settled all disputes for the time. Amongst other peculiarities of Captain Jessamy, he was remarkable for an uncommonly white pair of hands; his nails were pared to a point, and he wore two rings on the right-hand little-finger, and a large broad one on the third finger of the same hand.

Opposite to Jim sat an old nabob, of as saffron a hue as thirty years' residence in the bilious climate of India could make him, and he seemed to eye his rough but honest *vis-à-vis* with a look of disdain and scorn, that nothing could surpass. It being champagne-day, as it is called on board an Indiaman, twice a week, the mixture of the champagne with other wines had made Jim so hazy, that, to use his own language, he shook a cloth in the wind.

After contemplating his opposite neighbour every now and then for some time, he at last mustered up a sort of polite courage sufficient to exclaim in no dulcet tones, "I say, old Yellow-Belly! will a glass of wine now do you any harm? or would you like summut stronger? I dare say our skipper here has plenty of good stuff in the locker. Come, Old Boy, the gale's over, and we'll drink to a safe arrival off the Jagernaut Pagoda."—"None of your vulgar

language to me, sir," most wrathfully replied the nabob, "I am not accustomed to such society and freedom."

"Come, come, Mister Curry Powder," quoth the undaunted Jim, "none of your gum, I'm used to keep company with your betters. Jim won't stand no nonsense," thundering down on the table a great brown mutton-fist, about the size and texture of the fore-paw of an elephant, and which, in comparison with Jessamy's delicate white hand, looked rather funny; "Jim's none of your feather-bed sailors," continued he; "many a time has his fist been in a tar-bucket; it doesn't look as if it had been eat——"

"What part of the turkey shall I assist you to, Mr. Bell," said Jessamy, anxious to interrupt this social conversation.—"Why, I likes the thigh part, Captain Jessamy."

"We don't call it so, Mr. Bell, on board our ships. *We* call it the upper part of the leg; there must be nothing in-delicate before ladies, Mr. Bell."

"Well, that's going it!" exclaimed Jim, throwing back his head in utter surprise. "Here's a pretty pass we've come to! Why, old messmate!" addressing himself to Fitzjohn, on the other side, "what would Poll Pipes have said, if we'd called her thighs the upper parts of her legs?"

At this critical juncture the mate, having charge of the deck, came in, and reported to Jessamy that the strange sail which had made her appearance to windward, was edging down, as if to speak the Tigris. Upon this, Jessamy ordered him to "neutralise the mizen top-sail, and render the jib insignificant."

"O by goles!" cried Jim, his weak intellects more and more expanded at these audacious novelties; "our men-of-war's men won't understand that Hingy (meaning East India) language. I'll step on deck myself;" and in another instant they heard him through the cabin sky-light calling out with a voice of thunder, "Forecastle, there! Haul down the jib! I say, you afterguard, shiver the mizen top-sail!"

During Jim's absence, it was debated whether or not he should be admitted into the cabin again. Mrs. Bluebottle, a half-caste, fat, matronly lady, who was on her passage out to take possession of some indigo plantations her dear papa had left her—this delicate damsel protested most violently against Mr. Bell's re-appearance; for although it was

decided *nem. con.* that Jim should never be invited again, still some of the guests, who entered into the broad truth of his character, were decidedly for his finishing the evening with them. These, then, carried the question.

As soon as Jim re-entered, he exclaimed, "I say, skipper, come, bear a hand; that strange sail, as you call it, is nothing more or less than a devilish fine English man-of-war brig, and she'll soon be within hail."

"Will she?" replied Jessamy, "then, boy," speaking to his servant, "give me my best brass trumpet, and my brown coat, edged with fur, and my silver spying-glass. We honourable company's officers, Mr. Bell, always make it a point to appear neat before those of the sister service."

"Give you H—, and shove you into it," said Jim, in reply to this fine speech of Jessamy's: "do you think any of our man-of-war captains would condescend to hail a tea-vagon? You've no 'cashion to be so blessed fine, it will only be some old buffer of a first lieutenant, if it is he at all."

"You really be so vulgar, Mr. Bell," here interrupted Mrs. Bluebottle, who was understood to have a sneaking regard for Jessamy, "that me no talk conversation with you 'gen."

"O dear! bless us and save us, Mrs. Blueskin," replied Jim, "who d'ye think 'll care for that? Why, I wouldn't be seen at a bull-bait with you in England! Don't give yourself any of them ere hairs here: I arn't been in Hingy without knowing what a *chi-chi* is—father white man, mother black slave, as they told me in the Bibi bazaar."

"Mr. Bill, or Bell, or whatever you may be called," said a tall, squeezed-in-waisted gentleman, of about thirty, with a snub nose, and face and hands the colour of a dirty lemon—"I won't have my mamma called any such names."

"Holloa! what another one going to board me?" replied Jim. "But never mind; I don't stand no nonsense with you skip-jaks; though I must say, Mr. Tawneycheek, you are enough to frighten old Nick himself. Why, you look like a thief and a murderer both—as if you'd killed a monkey, and stole his face."

"Come, come, gentlemen," said Fitzjohn, not knowing how this amalgamation of such opposite materials might end, "my old messmate, Jim Bell, is as good a fellow as

ever broke biscuit. I am sure he means no offence to any one. You must allow for the whole of his life being passed in rather rough quarters, and not, on that account, refuse to be good friends with him. In the meanwhile, I beg leave to propose the health of the absent president, Captain Jessamy, who has gone on deck to hail the man-of-war brig."

"Oh, with all my heart," said Jim: "so Mr. Bluebottle, and you, Mr. Yellowbelly, I beg your pardons, both of ye, if any of my gammon has stuck in your gizzards; so, to do away with everything but a messmate-like feeling, I votes we hob and nob together.

"'For the sign of a true-hearted sailor
Is to give and to take a good joke.'"

CHAPTER XXV

To those acquainted with the ships that were formerly employed in the exclusive commerce of our East India Company, it must be known that nothing could exceed the comfort, respectability, and excellent table always kept on board, for those passengers who migrated in petty shoals, from Europe to the different ports of our possessions in Asia.

Amongst other commodities, in which the great monopolists traded, was the important one of wives: so that the Leadenhall Street directors may be said to have possessed the most extensive fair, for the fair in England. This staple has now, however, been done up.

Those ships bound for Calcutta, used to have always the most choice selection of young ladies, starting thus in search of spouses, of which the Tigris had on board eleven. The chief cabin passengers consisted, as I said before, of seventeen males and fifteen females.

First we shall name Colonel Johnson and his son, an ensign in his father's regiment, which both were going out to join. He was a steady old soldier, who had spent his life in the army, and nearly in the same regiment; but, having no interest, had dragged up, after forty-seven years' active service, to become one of the lieutenant-colonels; and, as his senior colonel was a sprig of nobility, who had

been born just before Johnson became major of the regiment, the commander-in-chief, with his usual foresight, had kept Johnson, as lieutenant-colonel, to manage affairs, whilst my lord was dandyfying in London, and receiving the emoluments of the colonelcy: and, as one of the Joe Humes of that day, had very properly made some observations in the House of Commons, about colonels getting their pay without work, it was hoped, by the men, that the regiment might be ordered home, to enable their noble and gallant commander to be occasionally seen at their head; once a month, perhaps, or on grand parade day: he being, as the case stood, totally unknown to most of the officers.

Still, the earl, his father, would, upon no account, allow his gallant son to expose himself to the horrible sea voyage and unwholesome climate of India; neither, on the other hand, could he think of depriving so deserving a regiment of the various advantages of boasting of a colonel who was heir to one of the wealthiest families, &c., &c.

Nabob Yellabellie, on whose singular cognomen Jim Bell fixed so distinctive a misnomer, was upon his return to India to make a second fortune. The first, which had, in round numbers, amounted to something like three hundred thousand pounds, had been squeezed out of the health and heart's blood of poor blackey, by purchasing rice, when it was cheap—causing a famine by the monopoly, and then doling it out to them, by retail, at six hundred per cent. profit.

The wealth that this man had thus obtained like a villain, he, with great consistency, had squandered like a fool. At the gaming-table and horse-races in England, every farthing of his iniquitously-amassed wealth found its way into the pockets of knaves, if possible more abject than himself. Puffed up with pride and self-consequence, he looked down upon all his fellow-passengers with sovereign contempt.

Bibi Indigo had been the mistress of a planter of that herb in India, and had borne him seven children, all of whom had been transmitted to England for their education, and the Bibi herself had generally taken the same trip to settle them there, or to bring them back, as circumstances required. Her children had, however, been so much better educated than their mother, that the most prominent feelings which they entertained for her, were those of shame

and disdain, being in truth most reluctant even to be seen with or near her. This fact unfortunately told well for neither party; though knowing the weakness of the human heart, it excites little surprise, when we reflect upon the wretched ignorance in which people of the Bibi's class are kept, more particularly on European subjects, on which indeed their want of knowledge is often most amusing. As an instance of this, Bibi one day inquired of Jim Bell, how the ladies of London amused themselves, when the India fleet had sailed.

"Why, ould woman," said Jim, "how d'ye manage in Calcutta upon sich an occasion?"—"O!" said the Bibi, "we eat him curry, lie on the sopha, and talk conversation."—"Very well then," replied Jim, "I suppose Moll or Wapping does the same."

At another time, she wished Jim to explain the reason why she was so dark, whilst the European women were so white.

"Why lor!" cried Jim, that's as clear as mud in a wine-glass—no rationary body can doubt 'tis because you drink such a sight of coffee."—"Den me no drink caffee 'gen," was the Bibi's sage response.

The son of this lady of property, William James Augustus Indigo, was the eldest born, and heir apparent to old Indigo, which old Indigo had died whilst the Bibi was in England. Mr. James Augustus consequently was returning with his *mar* to settle the affairs of his *par*.

Augustus was first intended for the English army, and had received a very excellent education at Harrow. But as Jim had justly described him, his complexion was that of a dirty lemon, being the second caste from the two parental colours, white and black.

In the British army, therefore, he soon found, to his sorrow, that no colonel would have an officer of that dingy hue. The East India Company's army was next tried, but in vain, as they have decided—and perhaps wisely—to have no black blood in command. Master Augustus was now, therefore, at the age of thirty, without any profession but that of a quasi gentleman, dressed in the highest fashion, and squeezed in at the middle like an hour-glass.

Cadet Williams was the son of an earl's butler, so promoted from his previous post of slave-driver and overseer,

on a West Indian estate ; his father's long services had been recompensed by my lord's procuring this appointment for his son. An upstart, full of ignorance and impertinence, he seemed to consider that the cash which his father had acquired by his squeezing another man's pocket, and the mere fact of his cadetship, entitled such a lump of ugliness to domineer and bully, whenever he thought fit. Imagining that with Jim Bell he had a fair opportunity of playing the great man, he foolishly determined on setting to work and crushing by means of what he thought his superior position, one of whose firmness of purpose and means of resistance he knew nothing. With these views he sat down and wrote the following letter to Jim Bell, who no sooner received it than he immediately repaired to his only friend on board, Fitzjohn, for his advice. The letter ran as follows :—

“SIR,—You having taken the liberty of speaking of my attachment to Miss Biddy Jones at the public table of Captain Jessamy, last Wednesday, and such conduct not being at all the thing to a young lady whom I am proud to call my friend, as well as highly detrimental to good society at large, I now have to tell you I hold it to be necessary that you should make the most ample apology, and beg pardon, in public, of all the cabin passengers, myself and Miss Jones, or I shall be obliged to declare that such conduct is the conduct of a rascal, by showing this letter to every one in the ship. You must be aware, sir, that as an army officer, and wearing a sword, I am not to be trifled with, and though it is very great condescension in a person of my consequence to notice you at all, yet I must insist upon immediate attention being paid to this communication.

“HUMPHRY CADOGAN WILLIAMS,
“Of the Hon. East India Company's Army.”

As Jim had entered Fitzjohn's cabin with this precious document in one hand, and a fathom of two-and-a-half-inch rope wound round the wrist of the other, Fitzjohn naturally asked him what he was going to do with the rope.

“Do!” said Jim, “why, of course, I'm going on the quarter-deck to give this swaggering bully a good rope's ending. The word rascal, you know, old boy, is not the most complimentary in the dictionary, and the man who uses it should not only have a broad back. but some little courage in his

heart. Whether he has any of this in him or not we shall soon see, when once my rope's end and his shoulders have been acquainted, and as he's so ready to pick a quarrel for one whom he's 'proud to call his friend,' the least he can do is to fight it out when it comes home to his own person."

"Well, but," said Fitzjohn, "how can you fight on board a ship?"

"Oh!" said Jim, "I've chalked it out all fair. We will each go to the spritsail yard-arm with a musketoon and a ship's cutlass, so that if the powder does nothing, we can advance and fight it out over the fore-stay until one is cut down. Then, of course, you know, he'll fall overboard, and that'll save us all the bother of any crowners quests and jury. You know, Fitz, there's no pennant in this tea-vagon, so we shan't have a court-martial."

Fitzjohn, being equally willing and determined to trounce a low-born coward, whose insolence, whenever he thought that insolence was safe, had been remarked by many of the other passengers, now proposed to Jim that he, Fitzjohn, should wait on the cadet. This offer Jim at once accepted, on condition that there should be no hauling down of colours on his part.

Fitzjohn accordingly sent word to the cadet, requesting an interview with him at an early opportunity in his, the cadet's, cabin. In a few minutes Fitzjohn was ushered into it, and, as it adjoined Miss Biddy Jones's, he distinctly heard stifled sobs from the fair lady. Fitzjohn, in a low, but decided voice, gave the cadet to understand that he had come to arrange a plan of battle for Jim, since, after sending such a letter, he could expect no less. With regard to the weapons, the proposal of Jim Bell was as follows:—Each combatant to have two musketoons charged with three balls a-piece, together with a ship's cutlass, well sharpened. The spritsail-yard to serve as the point for combat, that being the only place where they could take a friendly crack at each other, without injuring the passengers or crew.

To this intelligence Fitzjohn added, that Mr. Bell gave him, the cadet, the choice of the yard-arms, advising him that if the musketoons took no effect, they were to advance, cutlass in hand, and fight it out over the forestay, bare-headed, until one fell overboard, when no doubt the sharks would save all further trouble.

On hearing this, the cadet turned pale, red and yellow, but made no answer, on which Fitzjohn reminded him that Bell was quite ready, and only waited until the cutlasses were well sharpened, which would be in a few minutes.

"What! does he send me," at last stammered out Williams, "no apology?"—"O dear! that we never think of," replied Gentleman Jack.

"But bless me," resumed the upstart, "if Mr. Bell will only say that he had no intention of quizzing me or Miss Jones, I shall be satisfied."—"I have no authority, sir," said Fitz, "to make or receive such a proposal, therefore you had better prepare for the spritsail-yard."

"For God's sake, Mr. Fitzjohn," screamed out Miss Jones, who had been listening through a hole in the bulk-head, produced by one of the knots in the wood, which had by her been most ingeniously filled up with cork, "do, Mr. Fitzjohn, make peace between them," repeated the lady, so far forgetting herself in the alarm, as to come running in at the cabin door. "I told you, Mr. Williams," addressing herself to the cadet, "that these men-of-war's men were not to be trifled with! They are all a blood-thirsty set of creatures, my uncle always said so."

Here the fair damsel began so to sob, that Fitzjohn kept up his gravity with great difficulty, and told Williams he would allow his apology to be accepted, provided that it was publicly read at the mess-table; therefore he must immediately decide upon that or the spritsail yard-arm; whereupon Fitzjohn left them to their meditations and early decision.

In the meantime Jim Bell had buckled on his cutlass, and, with a musketoon over his shoulder, took his station on the forecastle, ready for Williams, as soon as he should make his appearance.

Williams, on the other hand, had sought the advice of Jessamy, and Jessamy, having taken a mortal dislike to Jim Bell, since his comparison of the musk cat, encouraged Williams neither to withdraw his challenge, nor to make nor accept any apology, though at the same time he gave him to understand, that in case he killed Bell, he must put him in irons for the rest of the voyage, to be tried by the civil power on his arrival at Calcutta. Now this was what I call very pleasant advice.

Two hours having elapsed without bringing to Fitzjohn any answer from Williams, he sent his compliments to the cadet, and requested to know who was his friend, that they might conjointly decide on the time, place, and weapons now necessary. Jessamy, however, having declined going any further in the matter, Williams applied to Colonel Johnson. The Colonel refused to take any hand in the business. At last the cadet bethought himself of Mr. Augustus Indigo, who, not having either forgiven or forgotten the allusion to his dear mar, by Jim named *chi-chi*—Indigo accepted the post, and waited on Fitzjohn.

After a considerable quantity of rigmarole from Mr. Indigo, this gentleman assured Fitzjohn that his principal had fifteen reasons why he could not either apologise to Mr. Bell nor go out with him. These he stated seriatim, when it very plainly appeared that the first reason was—he had no great relish for fighting. The rest of the reasons were anything that the hearer chose to make of them, but chiefly tending to this point, that the slave-driver's son considered Jim Bell most unmentionably inferior to himself, and one whom it would be utterly impossible for him to meet.

In answer to all this, Fitzjohn replied, that the question of inferiority was settled by the fact that Mr. Bell walked the quarter-deck of his majesty's ship Rumbly, and that he had done duty as an officer of a watch, and was received by the captain and commissioned officers at their tables, and moreover, that he was a useful officer, though in a junior rank, and that no one could refuse to meet him.

Fitzjohn then proceeded very quietly to insinuate the very great probability that Jim Bell would make use of his fathom of two-and-a-half-inch rope, which would leave a sort of brand that could not be easily wiped out.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DURING the debate of the knotty points recorded in the last chapter, the weight of the musquetoon and the two hours' delay had so increased Jim Bell's impatience, that he faced to the right-about, and marched directly down to the cadet's cabin. Having saluted the bulkhead with a

kick, which might have broken open any common street-door, he began with, "Soger ahoy! I say, you soger, are you for a bit of a fight, or what?"—"I refer you to my second," squeaked Williams, from within.

"The devil may have your second," replied Jim, "but I'll have you for my first, depend on it, my boy! and if you don't show a leg out of that ere nest of yours, hang me but I'll fire slap into you. Here goes!"

To this peremptory summons no answer was made, and Jim, who never intended to put this threat into execution, having waited a few minutes, began *de novo*.

"But I say, soger, if you are not for a fight, I'll give you a round at single-stick: will that suit your trim?"—"You shall hear from me as soon as I get on shore, Mr. Bell."

"But you shall feel me before seven bells, Mr. Williams, I'm for none of your 'pologies, as Mr. Fitzjohn calls them. So hang me if I don't welt you well, the first time I catch you out of dock, my boy:" with this last effort Jim retired growling to his duty of seeing the grog mixed for the men-of-war's men.

Miss Jones, the *teterrima causa belli* in this case, had been a millinery damsel in town for some time, with little or no employment; but failing in work, she had art sufficient to muster up what little sum she could scrape together, amounting to some two hundred pounds: with this she fitted herself out, and determined to go to India on a spec.

She had, on first coming aboard, made a dead set at the nabob, knowing him to be rich, but that shot had fallen short of its target. She next pointed all her artillery upon Silly Billy, as the cadet was called, in hopes of getting him to marry her; in which object she seemed likely to succeed. She therefore stuck to Williams like a leech, and, if report speaks truth, had already obtained from him a promise to this effect.

Amongst the rest of the passengers were seven young and well-educated English ladies, going out to be married; their friends having exhausted their small incomes, to give them a good stock of clothes, in hopes of their getting husbands from among some of the rich and generally old inhabitants of Calcutta. Here were to be seen, health and

beauty, in all shapes and sizes, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-two.

There are some reflections, naturally not of the most pleasing description, which spontaneously present themselves, on beholding young women thus put forward in the world; at the same time there are exceptions, in the case of which, on the other hand, sentiments of the strongest compassion and regard are excited. Such an exception was there to be found, on board the Tigris, in the person of Miss Jane Wilson. This young lady was the daughter of a clergyman in the West of England, and one who had evidently received, not only a good education, but that correct and honourable culture of mind which alone can render woman the pearl beyond price.

But it was not in intellect and feeling only that her beauty was conspicuous. Her figure, though inclined to be tall and slight, was exquisitely made: while of her features it might indeed be said, "*vultus est index animi*," or, as Byron has elegantly rendered the same sentiment into our language, "her spirit breathing through her face." Her eyes were large and very dark, with that confiding expression of repose so dangerous to the peace of the "lords of the creation;" her eyebrows being also highly arched, and the contour of her face strictly oval. She might have been held a fair representative of that Turkish beauty which Lady Wortley Montagu so profanely extolled in preference to that of England. The only exception to this comparison might, perhaps, have been held to be her complexion, which, for the colour of her eyes and hair, was singularly fair and florid.

The history of her voyage to India had in it a degree of melancholy well suited to the pensive countenance. Her father, having only a most scanty living, on which to support a wife and seven daughters, was obliged most reluctantly to follow the advice of a more experienced friend, and consented that one of them should emigrate to India, where, in hopes of a rich marriage, she might contribute to the welfare of her sisters and to the support of an invalided and beloved mother, should it please Heaven to leave her at any time a widow.

The bitter part now came;—the choice of who should become the wanderer from their humble but not unhappy

home, the father left to the poor girls themselves. All equally dreaded it, when Jane, with a goodness of heart that particularly characterised her, made the painful sacrifice of declaring that, as the eldest, she was willing to become the expatriated.

The scene that ensued at her departure nothing can describe ; though, alas ! too many possess a true prototype of its misery treasured up among the sacred griefs of memory. I still fancy I see the weeping mother, led by her husband into the little library, where all her sisters were hanging round Jane's neck—I appear once more to hear the prayers solemnly offered up to Heaven by them all, not only for her safety and happiness, but for the joy of all meeting again.

“That can never be !” interrupted the poor mother, with a sad foreboding that a few months converted into prophecy. Alas ! even then, a final separation had occurred ; a severe fainting fit followed this exclamation ; and before this had passed away, her daughter had been hurried from her home.

The person under whose care poor Jane was placed, was Mrs. Indigo,—that lady having gone to Devon for the benefit of the climate, and chanced to settle in the village of which Mr. Wilson was minister. It appears that Mrs. Indigo had, in the first instance, intended Jane for Augustus, her son ; but on Miss Wilson disclosing, in perfect innocence and truth, the state of her finances, which were limited to a letter of credit on the respectable firm of Palmer and Co. for eighty pounds, she not only became extremely cold, but rude ; and one day, when Fitzjohn entered Miss Wilson's cabin unexpectedly, he found her bathed in tears. On pressing her to disclose her troubles to him, he found that the Bibi had told Jane, she must marry the first offer she received on her arrival in Diamond Harbour, however old the gentleman might be—but the older and the richer, the better.

On hearing this, Fitzjohn was on the point of throwing himself down on his marrowbones, and, in declaring his passion, make a tender of his hand and heart ; but when he reflected that a midshipman's half-pay, three farthings a year, paid quarterly, was barely sufficient to support the expenses of a wife and family, prudence made him pause, though strongly against the dictates of his heart.

CHAPTER XXVII.

At last the long-desired moment arrived, when, on Saturday at eleven A.M., the Jagernaut Pagoda was discovered from the mast-head of the Tigris. A pilot brig soon approached the ship, and in the evening she was safely moored in Diamond Harbour. An express was immediately forwarded to Calcutta, giving an account of the arrival of the Tigris and a particular description of the names, ages, and accomplishments of all the young adventurers who had come out to market for husbands.

On the Tuesday following, a grand dinner was announced on board the Tigris. The young ladies were all recommended to put on their best apparel, and were most scientifically lectured by the Bibi Indigo and Captain Jessamy, upon their conduct on that auspicious day.

The budgerows, with the rich sallow Europeans, arrived in due time; every Saib attended by his hookabedah. Fitzjohn and Jim stationed themselves on the gangway to observe the stateliness and self-complacency with which these "Counts Rupees" strutted up to Jessamy, who stood hat in hand to receive them.

The young ladies had taken their stations on the cushions along and athwart the transom of the after-cabin, leaving a space between each for a gentleman to sit down. Bibi, Miss Jones, and three middle-aged tabbies, formed the first half-moon line in advance; so that the dear petticoats appeared like the combined fleets at the battle of Trafalgar, each leaving an opening to pass through the first, to the second line.

As soon as the old boys had put on their well-washed jackets, the whole eleven, having broken through the first line, were introduced separately, and very deliberately, to the seven angels, which formed the second or transom line.

The young ladies had already been given to understand, that these were all men of considerable independence; and that the person who selected and sat down by them, would lead them to the dinner-table, and probably make them an offer of marriage before the dinner-cloth was removed. They, therefore, knew full well that they must make their

decision to say *yes* or *no*, when the gentlemen came in to coffee in the after-cabin, which would be as soon as the loll shrob had been freely circulated.

Fitzjohn, who was a cabin-guest on this eventful day, stood with anxious eye and throbbing heart, to see who would seat himself by the side of the beauteous Jane Wilson. It would, indeed, be difficult to analyse, and still more so to describe, his feelings, when he beheld this berth, the object of all his hopes and fears, taken up by an old crazy fellow, sixty in age, but eighty in constitution, having been forty-five years in India. From the deference paid him by the rest of the company, he was evidently very rich, and in high consideration; and most heartily did Gentleman Jack bless him, as he came to anchor alongside of his beloved.

Fitzjohn was now convinced that he really was in love, and, as the old dotard towed poor Jane into the fore-cabin, Fitz sheered up alongside, and sat next to her, Count Mulligatawny, the old fellow, being on the other.

After the count had baled into his hold two good plates of this famed soup, the fire of which he had quenched by a bottle of iced Madeira, he said to Jane, "How old are you, my dear?"—"Very nearly nineteen," replied she.

"That's a good age to be married," said the count; "they marry young in this climate."—"I do not think I am old enough, sir," said Jane.

"It is never too young to get a good husband, young lady," replied he, patting himself on the chest. "Have you many brothers and sisters, my dear?"—"Yes, sir, seven sisters, and we are all very poor. My father himself is only a poor curate in Devonshire; but we were all very happy."

"What made you come to India, my dear?" said he. Jane squeezing Fitzjohn's hand, faltered, and appeared confused. "What did you say, sir?" trying to get time.

"What brought you out to India?" repeated he.—"Why the Tigris, to be sure," said Fitz, coming to his darling's rescue; "and a d——d rough passage she has had of it, old boy!"

"Who do you call old boy, young spark?" angrily demanded Mulligatawny.—"Don't spark me," returned Fitz, for I only want a bit of lighted tinder to blow up altogether."

Jessamy here, to use an expressive phrase, looked thunder and lightning at Jane, giving her at the same time a gentle hint, that served to remind her she had *no friends or acquaintance* at Calcutta, and therefore, in the opinion of said Jessamy, *had better* make one, when she had so good an opportunity; because, as he had given her very plainly to understand, that "every lady must leave the ship to-morrow."

How often during the evening did Fitz curse his own folly in having always spent his prize-money as fast as he could for fear of taking any to sea with him. But so it was, and there was no help for it. The hour for the ladies' removal into the after-cabin arrived, and this brought Fitz and the count cheek by jowl.

After the usual inquiries about the voyage, the count gave Fitzjohn a very kind invitation to his bungalow at Calcutta, and added, "that if he should marry Jane Wilson, of which he had serious thoughts, he hoped to see him, Fitz, at the wedding-dinner."

For this Fitzjohn thanked him, and inquired whether he had Jane's consent.

"O that will come, of course," said the count, "*if* I ask her. They never refuse when they come on a spec., because it is a rule amongst us of the higher order, never to ask a girl who has refused an offer."

"And pray, how long, sir," inquired Fitzjohn, "will it be before you pop the question, as they call it in England?"—"I shall make up my mind," said he, "by the time I have smoked another chillum;" this being the name of the article they smoke in their hookah pipes.

Fitz, hearing this, began to think how he should manœuvre to get into the steerage, or after-cabin, before the count, when Jessamy told him the commodore had just anchored in the Rumbly, and sent a boat for him to go on board, together with a message that he would, on the next morning, receive on board the men he had lent the Tigris to navigate her, as the Rumbly must move up to Kedgerree in the morning's flood-tide.

As the boat was ready manned alongside, Fitzjohn was taken flat a-back on hearing this piece of intelligence, and, as he could not pay off, to fill on either tack, he resolved to make a stern board of it, as it were, into the cabin,

there to say one word to Jane previous to his leaving the ship.

On opening the steerage-door, however, his eyes wandered in vain round the cabin—Jane was not there, and, at the same moment, the black steward came up to him, and said, “Massa Captain Jessamy order no men-of-war gemman to come to after-cabin. All kept for rich Nabob Saib to make lub to pretty English gal.”

In the first impulse of passion Fitzjohn thought of taking Jessamy in his arms and pitching him into the river, through the quarter gallery, but a moment’s consideration made him reflect that any other plan of proceeding would, on the whole, perhaps, be quite as politic. Finally, therefore, he determined to hasten on board the commodore, and return in time to join the steerage party.

Having arrived on board the *Rumbly*, he was sent for into the cabin, when the commodore put into his hands the following note, which he had himself carried aboard, with other papers:—

“Michael Jessamy returns his best thanks to Commodore Topham for the assistance he has lent the *Tigris*, and will thank him not to allow Mr. Fitzjohn to return on board his ship for reasons he will explain when he has the honour of paying his respects to him at Calcutta.”

“What good have you been at?” said Topham.—“Good, sir?” replied Fitzjohn, “really, upon my honour, sir, I am not aware.”

“Ay, ay, that’s always the way with you midshipmen. To hear your own stories, never were purer souls in human bodies, but we shall hear more of this by-and-by. Meanwhile just be good enough to stay quietly on board here, and when Mr. Bell returns with the men, he will bring your traps.”

Every feeling of anger that could enter a man’s breast, rushed into that of Fitzjohn on hearing this, but when Topham’s mind was once decided, he well knew the impossibility of rebelling; he therefore left the cabin, internally vowing the deepest vengeance against Jessamy.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON the following morning the Tigris moved up the river on the flowing tide, so that when Fitzjohn, who had kept the middle watch, came on deck at six bells, in hopes of finding an excuse to get on board and see Jane Wilson once more, the Tigris was no longer in sight.

In the course of the following day, Jim Bell and all the men who had been lent to navigate the Indiaman, returned on board, Jim having settled, perfectly to his own satisfaction, his account with the cadet, by simply taking the would-be bully by the nose an hour before he left the Tigris, and laying smartly over his shoulders a good rattan. The cadet was loud in his threats of the law, but Jim Bell, knowing that the exposure must be all on the cadet's side, snapped his fingers at this declaration. A short time proved him to be right in his surmise—the overseer's descendant pocketed this personal insult as quietly as it was afterwards proved he had done one or two before.

Jim Bell, having now got this matter off his hands, was asked by Fitzjohn to assist him in running off with Jane Wilson.

"O, as to the matter of that, Bo'!" said Jim, "I'll lend ye a fist with all my heart, but as ye ha'n't got the legs of a grasshopper, where the devil are ye going to run to?"

This piece of plain common sense fairly posed our hero, so the friends finally determined to go ashore and leave the nature of their operations to the necessities of the moment.

On asking leave, however, the commodore could not possibly grant him anything of the sort, till he had heard Captain Jessamy's explanation.

"Well, well, Mr. Jessamy, your life won't be long in the land," thought Fitz. But then he had forgotten to take the sea into consideration, for, on the next morning, from some unexpected orders, with which it was not thought absolutely necessary that the midshipmen should be made acquainted, the commodore got ready for sea, and ere another twenty-four hours had elapsed, the Rumbly was fairly in blue water.

Fitzjohn's distress was certainly of the deepest kind, but remedy there was none, so, after refusing his grog for two

days, he managed to sketch a rough likeness of his adored one, and pasting this in the front of his quarter bill, he drank—"Sweethearts and wives on Saturday night," and discovered on Sunday morning, in the words of Sir Henry Halford, that his "symptoms were much ameliorated."

They now learnt that the Rumbly was on her way back to her old station of the Red Sea, and soon after her arrival Gentleman Jack's attention was most fully occupied by his being appointed, with Jim Bell as his first mate, to the command of a small prize—a brig—with orders to survey the eastern coast.

Whilst lying at Mocha, the senior (because the only) king's officer on that part of the station, he received orders to sail for Aden, there to stir up the Sultaun against his neighbour, the Imaum of Mecca—then favouring the French interests in these seas.

During the progress of this charitable duty, the Sultaun's eldest son came on board the brig and spent a month, which time Fitzjohn kept at sea for his amusement. On the return of Fitzjohn from the month's cruise with Mahommed Ali, the son, he was invited to spend half-a-moon, fourteen days, at the Sultaun's palace, situated in the mountains, eight leagues from Aden—an invitation which he most joyfully accepted.

This hospitable proposition having been acceded to, our hero accordingly found two saddle-horses, and a guard of eight men, on the beach, besides one camel, to carry their luggage. As half the expected pleasure would have been lost without a companion, Gentleman Jack took with him Jim Bell. It was with the greatest difficulty that these two harum-scarum reefers could mount the fiery horses of the Arab breed, but each horse being led by a groom, Jim observed to Fitz, "I say, bo', if your honour would please to order this ere chap that's got my horse in tow, to cast off the tow-line, I think if I was to make all sail up that ere sand-hill, I'd give him a quieter" (alluding to a steep and very deep sand which covered the hill out of the town), "for he keeps wagglng his after-timbers as if his starn-post was loose."

To say the truth, Fitzjohn felt the same unpleasant movement, which is peculiar to Arab horses.

"Moreover," says Jim, "my craft" (meaning his horse)

"keeps backing and filling like a collier in Limehouse Reach."

On hearing this pathetic remonstrance, Fitz made a sign to the man who held Jim's horse to "let draw," and away he went like the wind. On seeing his companion at liberty, Fitzjohn's steed got loose from the Arab that was leading him, and followed Jim's, so that it was quite a race between the two; and as the horses began to blow, Jim kept digging in his shovel-shaped stirrups into the ribs of his beautiful animal, swearing, at the same time, "You clapped on sail without orders from the quarter-deck, and blow me, if you sha'n't carry it, until your bows are under water!"

As neither Jim nor our hero had enough of the dandy in their composition to wear any straps under the shoe, their trowsers soon got up to their knees, which exposed the secrets of their dress to the Arab guard, and showed that Jim had no stockings, and Fitzjohn only half ones.

Luckily for them, their broad-brimmed straw-hats were made fast with lanyards, so that when they fell off, which they soon did, they kept flapping on the horse's crupper, and frightened them into their utmost speed.

On reaching the top of the sand-hill, which they had mounted knee-deep in sand, their horses seemed to have had a sufficiency of this work, and the guard having joined them they travelled on until ten A.M., when they rested during the heat of the day, beneath some date-trees, and by the side of a shallow well of the most beautifully limpid water.

Here, as it may be well imagined, they were sufficiently glad to refresh themselves, and Jim giving a broad hint, that they "might as well pipe to breakfast, or dinner, or something," took down from the back of the camel a large hand-basket, which contained salt pork, ready-cooked hard eggs, some ship biscuits, and some bottled-porter and rum.

Having spread out these rude but welcome viands on the smooth and delicious verdure that surrounded the well—the true oasis of the desert—they invited the officer of their guard to join their mess, although Jim confessed "he didn't much like the appearance of him, as it put him in mind of the gentleman in the desert," who so obligingly borrowed first "that ere jacket," and then "that ere pair of breeches."

However, the invitation once given, Jim scorned to be a bad messmate, and therefore offered him some pork, which Fitzjohn was obliged to remind Jim no true Mussulman ever eats, as they consider the pig an unholy animal.

"Oh!" says Jim, "call it a piece of camel, they won't know the difference." But to this manœuvre Fitzjohn would not consent, but he pointed out to his old shipmate, that if they discovered what it really was *after* they had *unknowingly* eaten it, they might be put to death; since both Turks and Christians are vastly fond of showing how religious they are, when a good opportunity offers of doing so at another's expense. "On the other hand," pursued Fitz, "if they eat it, knowing what it is, the sin lies at their own door."

"Hang it, messmate," returned Jim, "you remind me of the Jew in the thunder-storm, who, whilst he was stowing his hold with a piece of nice roast sucking-pig, behind a hay-stack, that none might see him, heard the thunder growl at a distance, and approach gradually towards him. 'O Moshes!' cried he, 'why, what a row you make, because poor Jew eat leetel piece of pork;' then cramming the rest down his throat, 'Vell, vell, what's done can't be undone, therefore I'll say no more about it.'"

This recondite anecdote, however, failed to move Fitz a whit from his original objection, but he determined to explain to the Arab officer from what animal the flesh was taken, and then leave the matter to his choice. Having for this purpose drawn a pig on a piece of paper, and made a grunting noise like one of the porcine fraternity, the officer and his men began capering about and spitting out of both sides of their mouths, as if to express their utmost abhorrence at the idea of eating it.

On witnessing this display of their detestation, Jim coincided with Fitz, as to the prudence of the part he had acted, while the Arabs contented themselves with some biscuit and the opium lozenges which they always use.

After the fat pork, it was found necessary to "belay all that," as Jim said, by a drop of rum, some of which the officer was offered. He tasted this spirit by dipping his finger in the drinking-cup, but refused taking a more liberal allowance. Next came the bottled-porter, which the Arab likewise refused, until Fitzjohn gave him to

understand that it was only *barley-water*. Hereupon, he took it most incontinently and with great affection, giving subsequently many broad hints during the journey, of an inclination to taste more.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ABOUT 4 P.M., when the heat of the day was in some measure lessened, our friends mounted their fiery Arabians, and ere long arrived in safety at the outer gate of the Sultaun of Aden's palace.

Scarcely had they here dismounted, when their old ship-mate, the Sultaun's son, came forward to receive, and conducted them into the apartments allotted for their use, the Sultaun himself being engaged taking coffee in his seraglio; into which terrible precincts, death was the penalty for any officious babbler, who might intrude with idle tales of business, to disturb his lord.

Gentleman Jack and Jim Bell now found themselves in a very large and magnificently fitted-up room, of an oblong shape, having broad divans covered with yellow silk placed around it, and four doors, one at each corner. In the middle of the room was a small but handsome carpet.

Jim having remarked that his "cupboard wanted fresh stowage," Fitzjohn gave Mahomed Ali to understand what was required; and in a few minutes two black Abyssinian slaves entered with a large silver bowl, about four times the size of the punch-bowl belonging to a country club, full of boiled rice, together with two whole fowls, and an Egyptian cruche full of sherbet.

"Halloa!" said Jim, "I think, skipper, it isn't *six* upon *four* here, but *two* upon *six*."—"Why ay, Jim, it looks something very like it. But why are you waiting to fall-to? An hour at this work is soon lost."

"I know it," replied Jim; "but, to tell you the truth, my starn-post is so plaguily shaken I can't come to an anchor, as you do on the carpet; I must wait for the chairs."—"Then," said Fitzjohn, "you'll wait long enough; they never use chairs in this country."

Upon hearing this, Jim swore most heartily at them for a country of "salvages;" and with great pain sat down.

After eating a most tremendous supper, and drinking all the sherbet, Jim observed, "This ere 'whistle belly wengance,' as Moll Pipes used to call the swipes on board the *Impetus*, wants a little qualification. I'll go and get the hamper from off the camel's back, if those ere gemmen, or whosomever they call themselves, ha'n't made free with the rum. About a go of rum now, or a little more, would do me no sort of harm; eh, Bo, what say you?"

Jim, having accordingly departed, soon returned with the hamper over his shoulder, but to his mortification discovered that all the bottles of barley-water, or porter, were quite empty, and the best part of the rum gone.

"Blow me tight!" said Jim, "if I didn't think them ere gemmen with the spears in their hands appeared a little hazy, or, as Pipes would have said, all 'mops and brooms.' They were drawing their swords when I went out, and that always shows Dutch courage. However, the only way to mend the matter, is to make ourselves happy with what's left." A piece of philosophy which Jim took care most admirably to enforce, by giving Fitz a thimbleful of the spirit, and drinking nearly all the rest himself.

Supper being over, and Fitzjohn observing Jim walking about the room, asked him what he was looking for.

"Why," said Jim, "I am only finding the bearing and distance to a bell, as I supposes whilst we are here, we sha'n't be our own sarvants."

"What!" quoth Fitzjohn, "don't you know the Mussulmans never use a bell? Only clap your hands together, Jim, and you will soon see the effect of it."

Upon doing as he was bid, with his mutton fists, these made a noise like shutting down the lid of an empty arm-chest, and in came two black slaves, who quickly cleared the decks.

Mahommed Ali and one of the eunuchs now entered; Ali having made his salaam, gave his guests to understand that his father would receive them after sunrise the next morning. The eunuch then showed them, first the door that went out into the garden, then a second, which led into a delicious bath, and afterwards pointed out to Fitzjohn a door, which upon being opened, led into a private seraglio, which the Sultaun had set apart for his use.

Here Mahommed Ali apologised to his friend, for having

limited the number of its inhabitants to the small number of *twenty-eight*, but "Allah," he said, "had decided that to no Giaour could a greater number be permitted." The fourth door was the entrance to a similar apartment for Jim Bell, but here the limit was drawn at thirteen.

"Well," said Jim, "here's a baker's dozen at any rate; d—n me if this isn't what I call true hospitality! I always thought we were pretty fair for that in old England; but hang me if John Turco is not the boy arter all, at any rate. What would Moll Pipes have said to sich a riggilation? I always thought that ere Ali was a good sort of a chap!"

Here Fitzjohn thought proper to interrupt Jim's self-gratulations by reminding him that "it was time to turn in, as the Sultaun was to receive them at daybreak."

As Jim had always been a bit of a scraper on the fiddle, and as, at the especial request of Mahommed Ali, he had brought this instrument with him, Jim proposed to string it up ready for the morning, as he said there was more dignity in a hambassador having a little music to accompany him; and as I can play 'Molly put the Kettle on,' 'Barney lave the Girls alone,' 'O dear! what can the Matter be?' and the 'March in Blue Beard,' tolerably bobbish, I think as how I had better prack-tize an hour or two."

To this proposal Fitzjohn replied with the most decided objections, saying, "In the first place, Master Jim, I am not an ambassador; and in the second, if I were, the 'music' would be, as you say, 'little' enough: while, on the broad principle, the means by which you propose to glorify our worthy selves, would in the eyes of the Sultaun produce just the contrary effect;—so that, in short, with all due deference to the fiddler, 'I'll have none of it.'"

On hearing this, Jim made another vain application to the rum-bottle, which he said was necessary to allay the grumbling in his main-hold. They then both laid down, and soon fell asleep on the divans.

Fitzjohn was awoke by Jim's bawling out in his usual sea voice. "Ay, ay, sir!"—and then, again, in a still louder tone, "Ay, ay, sir! well I'm bearing a hand as fast as I can! Do you think Jim Bell ever rigs in dock? Why I turned in like a trooper's horse, all standing." On hearing this route, Fitzjohn demanded to know what was the matter, and what occasioned such loud answers.

"Why," said Jim, "there's a fellow been hailing us from the main-top this half-hour, and he won't take ay, ay, for an answer. I suppose as how it's to show us to this ere great hemperor of Morocki, like the wild beastesses."

"Why, what do you mean? Are you asleep, Jim, or awake?" replied Fitz: but having listened for a few seconds, he soon found it was the muezzin calling the faithful to their morning prayers from the minaret of the mosque, which had so perplexed his old shipmate. On explaining this to Jim,—“Oh!” said he, “is that all? Then what a devil of a row that ere feller makes about nothing; for my part, when I'm ashore, I does all my church business in a private way, ever since Tom Levett was flogged for calling the parson's chief mate,” (meaning the clerk,) “a beggar.”

“When was that?” asked Fitzjohn.—“Why,” said Jim, “it was just before you joined the Impetus. Did you never hear Pipes tell the story?”

“No,” says Fitz.—“Well, then,” says Jim, “as soon as I've scraped the ‘March in Blue Beard’ over, which I'm to play before the hambassador, I'll tell you all about it.”

“Tell the story first,” says Fitz, and then you can play the march whilst I am taking a walk in the garden.”

“Why you knows as how we had one Leaftenant Barebones in the Lee Impetus, a regler, strait-laced, sallow-looking feller: we used to say he looked as if he had been cooked and stewed up again. Moss being absent on leave, Barebones did the duty of first leaftenant: so when the liberty men were all mustered into the launch one Sunday afternoon, Tom Levett, the boatswain's mate, axed to go too; but Barebones said as how the number was complete. ‘I only axes,’ says Tom, ‘because I wants to go to the Methodist meeting this evening.’ ‘Very praiseworthy, indeed,’ says Barebones;—‘Mister Levett, you may go; but mind you remember not to forget to come off again.’ ‘O Lord, your honour, you may trust me anywhere.’ ‘So I would,’ says Barebones, ‘except in a grog-shop.’ ‘Lord bless your honour,’ says Tom, ‘does your honour go for to think I've any hidea of such a thing?’ ‘No, no, Mr. Levett,’ says Barebones, ‘I've too good an opinion of you.’ So with this, Tom jumps into the launch; and when he had got ashore, unluckily, he had to pass a public-house called the Half-moon and Fiddle. ‘Well,’ says Tom, ‘whether or

no, I can't say, but I must just stop here for a minute.' Well, ye see, after taking a stiff nor-wester with an old shipmate who was there by haxident, Tom was obliged to stand treat. As soon as the second glass was done, Tom says, 'Now, my hearties, I must make sail, and come to an anchor at the meeting; but I sha'n't be there over long, seeing I shall only drop it under foot, and lay at a short stay peak.' Well, by this time, d'ye see, Tom had been staying so long at the public-house, that the sarment was just beginning. 'Well, I'm in good time, at any rate,' says Tom, 'cause I know that Barebones will ax me the text, as a proof as how I have been to the meeting. Well,' says Tom, 'after the parson had read his commission, as it might be, he reads his text,' from some chapter and varse which Tom didn't recollect; but the words he did, which, you know, is much betterer, and part of these was, 'When it is calm, there is but little wind.' Well, d'ye see, having said this once, presently he says it again. 'Why how's this,' thinks Tom, 'there's devil a seaman at all amongst this ere crew. Please your honour,' says Tom, hailing the parson, 'I've been at sea, man and boy, these forty years, therefore your honour must believe I knows somm'ut about it; and therefore I just ax leave to set your honour right in this little bit of seamanship, because I say as how, your honour, that when it's calm, there's *no* wind *at all*! It's wot we calls a Hirish hurricane.' 'Turn him out,' says the parson's chief mate. 'You be d——d,' says Tom; 'I won't go! you must be but a lubberly son of a sea-cook to talk of sich a thing, after my taking the trouble to set your skipper there right in his course.' As Tom said this, he looked up by chance into the gallery, and who should he spy there but Bill Bobstay, our captain of the forecastle. 'I say, Bill,' cries Tom, 'if you'll stick by me, I'm blowed if we won't wollop the chief-mate and all the crew, and then we'll go over to the Half-moon and Fiddle, and have a couple of glasses nor-nor-west.' 'Stick to you, Tom?' says Bill; 'that I wool;'—and down he comes over the thwarts of the gallery, and sliding down the pillar hand over hand, was soon alongside Tom. 'Now let's see,' says Tom, 'where's the ten that dare turn us out?—and as for you, you beggar, Mr. Chief-mate, if I come athwart your hawse, I'll soon cut your cables.' Well, d'ye see, Fitz, this looked most preciously

as if they were to have it all their own way ; when presently, of a sudden, six or eight fellers, with short staffs painted with the king's arms, who called themselves constables, laid 'em aboard right astern, saying, ' We 'rest you in the king's name.' My eyes ! at the name of the king, Tom and Bill were both dumb-founded : it clapped a stopper on their jaw-bags in a crack, making their tongues absent without leave, as 'twere. ' In the king's name ! ' says Tom, as soon as he could speak ; ' well, he's the only man I'd haul my colours down to, for he's a sailor's friend, God bless him ! and if so be as how you'll prove yourselves horficers, we'll strike ; if not, clear for haction, for we'll soon board you on the bow, and draw a little claret from your figure-head, my boy.' However, 'twas all right, sure enough ; so the end of it was, Tom and Bill were boxed up all night, like two birds in a cage ; and, next morning, they were brought on board, and wiped down with four dozen apiece :—so that you may safely swear, Bo, they ha'n't been able to abide the sight of a parson ever since."

CHAPTER XXX.

OUR hero and Jim Bell were now soon dressed ; and Fitzjohn, having put on his best uniform with the weekly accounts, and his gold-laced hat, Jim put on his muster trowsers and best jacket, though he had never possessed an opportunity of replacing the uniform with which he had so obligingly parted to the "gentleman" in the desert. Jim, moreover, having well "prack-tized" the "March in Blue Beard," begged permission to take with him his darling fiddle, which permission he obtained, on condition that he should keep it behind him, and under his jacket.

In a few minutes an Armenian, who acted as interpreter, speaking a little bad English, announced to Fitzjohn that the Sultaun was ready to receive them. Fitzjohn, in return, inquired of Bobbagee, the Armenian, what was the ceremony to be used.

Bobbagee informed him that he must go on his knees and kiss the hem of the Sultaun's garment, bowing his forehead, moreover, three times to touch the ground. This Fitzjohn positively refused to do, declaring that he was

willing to pay to him the same mark of respect that he did to his own sovereign, but no more; and that sooner than submit to such degradation, he would return on board his own ship, without seeing him at all.

To this Bobbagee replied, that he dared not propose such a thing to the vizier, as his head would answer for it. Ali, however, entering at the moment, put an end to all difficulties, as he decided upon accompanying our hero, and taking upon himself the part of "maître des cérémonies." It was also agreed that Jim should leave his fiddle behind.

On entering the outer court of the palace, they found it full of horsemen; one of them practising the djerrid, and riding at full gallop round a spear, which was kept fixed in the ground in a perpendicular position; the horseman, meanwhile, resting his fore-finger on the point of the spear, and never allowing it to deviate.

The outer gate of the state apartment they found guarded by four immense Abyssinian blacks, with broad battle-axes in their hands; and on the opening of the door which these defended, our hero beheld the Suldaun at the end of a long apartment, which was raised every ten or twelve feet by a step.

On the highest dais sat the great Turk, with his officers of state placed around him on divans of a semicircular form.

Fitzjohn approached the throne gradually, bowing as he went up towards it, and ultimately bringing-to in front of the Suldaun, there took his stand, with Jim Bell behind him. The Suldaun, in return, welcomed him to his court, and thanked him for his kindness to his son on board the Expedition: after which he proceeded to ask him many questions about a ship. At last, observing the cocked-hat in our hero's hand, he requested him to put it on, that he might see the effect of it. This Fitzjohn, did, à la Milord St. Vincent.

The Suldaun, after contemplating for some moments this *tableau vivant*, gravely remarked, that ours must be a very curious nation, to put up a cocked-up hat upon a sailor-officer, who must be subject to gales of wind, more likely to blow the hair off his head, than to leave in its place such a machine as a cocked-up hat. To this verdict on our folly, the mirthless men of the divan all assented, stroking their

beards, as much as to say, "We would never have done so;" and Fitzjohn, in his own conscience, could not help thinking John Turco was partly right.

After the conference was over, Fitzjohn was requested to take a seat on a divan, a little retired from that on which the ministers were sitting. Our hero then reminded Jim to be careful, and not to turn his back on the Sultaun in retiring: Jim, to use his own language, no sooner received these instructions, than he "hove all aback, and got such starn way," as nearly to tumble over the bench of sedate councillors.

For this Jim in great haste apologised, saying, "I axes your honours' pardon; I forgot to shift my helm, and was nearly aboard you."

Fitzjohn having made the last inclination of his head in retiring, Bobbagee threw himself on his knees before the Sultaun, and told him that he had done all in his power to make the "Giaour captain," put himself into the same respectful posture, and by kissing the hem of his robe, pay him that adoration it was his highness's right to receive; but that this he, the Giaour, had refused to do.

The Sultaun here replied, "I think he has done perfectly right: tell him that I am glad to see him."

As soon as Fitzjohn and Jim had seated themselves on the divan, not without sad groanings from Jim on account of his sternpost, chibouks and coffee were handed to them. As there were numerous small cups on the silver salver, Fitzjohn hinted to Jim that it would be wiser to take the furthest off, since the Turks, on state occasions, had an odd fancy for flavouring their coffee with a little poison, when intended for the use of their friends.

On the third evening after the arrival of our worthy pair, they were invited to witness a nautch, or dance, at the house of the general who commanded the Sultaun's cavalry, Seyd Abderrimin. As Ali had often heard Jim scrape the fiddle on board the Expedition, he requested Jim to bring it with him: and as it was understood the Sultaun would be present, though equitette would not allow him to be visible, Fitz encouraged Jim to carry it.

When they arrived at the Seyd Abderrimin's house, they were placed in front by Ali and Bobbagee, the Armenian interpreter, who pointed out to them a small window-

shaped aperture in the wall, much above their heads, before which was drawn a green silk curtain, and behind, as they understood, the Sultaun was placed.

Each guest was provided with a chibouk and sherbet, and, at a signal given by the Seyd, eight beautiful young women, with bangles in gold, around their ankles and wrists, presented themselves: four of these were dressed in pale blue and spangled turbans, and tunics of the same colour, reaching half way down the thigh. The other four wore similar dresses, with this difference, that the hue was of pale pink.

All the eight were attired in very thin and loose muslin trowsers, which were drawn close round the ankle by silver bands, and a tassel hanging down. Previous to our friends setting out, they themselves had been requested to put on turbans and loose cloaks, to prevent attracting that attention which always followed them in the public streets.

It was with the greatest difficulty that a turban could be adjusted to Jim's great brown face and head. During the operation he swore that he "would much sooner wear a double-wall knot of three-and-a-half-inch rope, as he should then have something he could feel;" "and as for these here trowsers which hang so loose in the bunt, I wonders the Turks haven't a been born with three hands, for I'm sure it must always require one hand for nothing else but to hold so much loose canvas up in place."

The only music, to which the nautch girls danced, was that of a small drum slung over the wrist like those used in Europe to dancing dogs, and which they called a tom-tom. The skill of the dancers was shown in throwing themselves into the most voluptuous attitudes, as a mode of appealing to the sensation of the audience. Even Jim was in raptures.

As soon as two dances had been completed, and the sherbet served round, which Bell did not drink without making wry faces, and giving broad hints of the rum-bottle, Ali proposed to Jim to amuse the audience with his fiddle, to which proposition he most willingly assented.

"Now," said he to Fitz, "I thinks if I plays the 'March in Blue Beard,' I shall strike 'em with *hawe*, but then them ere dancing misses won't enjoy it." At last, it was decided that Jim should begin the march; and certainly

even Paganini, that prince of fiddlers, never played before a more astonished audience.

When the march was ended, Jim began "Barney leave the Girls alone," and on observing some of the dancing girls grinning through the crack of the entrance-door, he roared out, "I say, why the devil don't you come out and shake a leg, marm?—Mister Tarpreter," addressing himself to Bobbagee, "tell them ere gals to come out and foot it a bit to a real English hair. Why, if I was in Capstan Square, at Portsmouth, I warrant I should not be long without plenty of them ere petticoat warmint."

At this Bobbagee looked all bewilderment, knowing as much how to "tarprete" such a speech, as Jim himself knew how to speak it in the Turkish.

Seyd Abderrimin, seeing the way in which Jim Bell rattled on, thought the fiddle must be a very easy instrument on which to play; but when Fitzjohn answered him to the contrary, and that sometimes people occupied their whole lives in learning it, he took up the vein of his master, the Sultaun, and observed that our English nation must have queer people amongst them, who made sailors wear cocked-hats, and spent their whole lives in learning to make a noise on four strings.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE time of our friends being thus employed in receiving the kindness of their royal host, passed very pleasantly, and as Seyd Abderrimin came often, and, when alone, took his grog as kindly as his mother's milk, to use the simile of Jim Bell, Fitzjohn ventured, the day before his departure, to ask the said Seyd to let himself and friend see the inside of his harem, to which Abderrimin most kindly consented.

An order was accordingly sent to the chief of the eunuchs to have everything prepared for their reception. Jim felt some qualms as to his accompanying Fitzjohn, since, he said, he did not want to be made a Signor Squallini; and, as Fitz did not press the matter, he ultimately remained at home.

Fitzjohn, accompanied by Seyd, arrived at the house of

the latter, after the heat of the sun had abated, and passing through the chamber, which adjoined that in which the dancing had been exhibited, Seyd took from the folds of his girdle, a key of the middle size, which opened his own private door into the immediate ante-room of the harem.

This room was of an octagonal shape, with silk divans ranged round it, and looking-glass let in, above the cushions of the divans, the height of the head. In the centre was a marble bath, coffin-shaped, of double size, and filled with rose-water. Around the room were eight niches, and in each niche was a large china vase, in which grew flowers. These shed a kind of nutmeg, spicy odour.

The most beautiful Persian carpets, of peculiar thickness, were spread along the floor so as to fill up the space between the bath and the divans, while the whole was lighted from above by a skylight of coloured glass. On opening the door which led direct from the bath-room into the harem itself, and with the key of which no one was entrusted, two black eunuchs of most athletic form, took their stations, one on each side of Fitzjohn, each holding in his hand a naked dagger, in form almost exactly similar to the Malay crease.

The harem was of a long oblong form, having four tiers of bed-places, one over the other like the cabin of a packet, and on each side of the door of entrance were the names of the inhabitants, amounting to two hundred and seventy: opposite to each name were marks like our numeral 7 and some Turkish writing, which Fitzjohn afterwards learnt to have been certain dates.

The two hundred and seventy fair ones in question were thus composed; one hundred and twenty were Circassians, eighty-four were Georgians, twenty-six Hindostanee women, nineteen Persians, and two French women, while the rest came from Abyssinia and the neighbouring nations. Besides this moderate collection, Seyd also had four Turkish wives; but these did not reside in the harem.

As the tenants of the last were all made to turn into their bed-places before the Giaour was admitted, poor Fitz, to his great disappointment, saw nothing but their faces peeping between the muslin curtains of their little pigeon-holes; and, as the Seyd led the way in rather a quicker step than Fitzjohn desired, he occasionally dropped a glove,

and then a pocket handkerchief, that the delay might give him time to make further observations.

The room was particularly clean and odoriferous, and after passing through the harem he was shown into the robing or dressing-room, in which were the two French ladies, who had belonged to the theatre Bonaparte had established at Cairo. On the retreat of the French army, they had, most unfortunately for them, as they said, been made prisoners, and sold in the public market. It was indeed no slight mitigation of their lot that they had been purchased by Seyd Abderrimin, who treated them with the greatest kindness, and employed them in superintending this department of his establishment.

Opposite to the dressing-room was the apartment of the eunuchs, of whom he retained ten, together with a chief, and they were, without exception, the finest-formed men Fitzjohn had ever beheld. They seemed in every respect perfectly happy and contented. Fitzjohn next visited the kitchen, and found that the ladies of the seraglio scarcely ever tasted meat, but were nourished chiefly on fruit and vegetables; and one of the duties of the aga, or chief eunuch, was to see that the parsnips, carrots, &c., were cut into such small pieces that the ladies of the harem could not easily choke themselves.

As the French women did not form a part, as their countrymen would have said, of the *matériel* of the harem, Fitzjohn obtained permission from the Seyd, to have an hour's conversation with them in the garden. This he did, not only to learn the minutiae of the Turkish customs in private life, but to be useful in obtaining them their liberty, if possible.

Their description of the harem was that of a place where all its inhabitants were perfectly happy, and treated with the greatest kindness; and from all they stated to Fitzjohn of what is termed "female slavery" in the East, it would appear that Europeans entertain very erroneous notions respecting that which is only another and less polished, as well as a far more extended, system of marriage.

They told him that when a female slave caravan arrived, which generally brought from twelve to fifteen hundred of the most beautiful of the population of the countries through which it passed, the Suldaun's officers have the

first choice for their master; then the principal officers of the court, select, in order of their rank, and the rest are exposed to sale on the Sunday, our Friday being their holy day. That each of these females might average in value about five hundred piastres, or six pounds of our money, if they are young and good-looking; that those which are not sold, return with the caravan, and their future destiny generally becomes that of hard labour in the fields of their native countries for the remainder of their lives.

Thus what may and certainly does appear, at first sight, to be a horrid cruelty, is in fact a great blessing to them, since to all intents and purposes the contract which takes place is, as I have said before, one of marriage.

The way in which this important and interesting question is viewed by those most concerned in it, has been strongly exemplified in modern Tunis, by the women themselves; for of the two thousand Greek girls, whose freedom was purchased by Charles X., ex-king of France, seventeen hundred and sixty returned voluntarily to the arms of their Turkish lords.

Always excepting their summary and sanguinary code of laws, it is impossible that any class of beings can behave more kindly to their women than the Turks. No one is allowed to purchase a slave without previously showing that he has property equal to her support, and depositing such a sum in the public treasury as will answer this purpose should he die.

Although Seyd Abderrimin numbered in his harem two hundred and seventy females, he had not more than twenty full dresses for the whole of these, and which, from their loose make, would fit, with little trouble, those who were selected for dancing and other amusements of the evening.

Whenever a selection was made it was almost by hazard. The list of all was generally brought in, and read over to Seyd, who gave one of his gravest nods—not removing the pipe from his mouth however—at the mention of the names of those to be admitted to the honour of his bath-room. The dancing-girls were chosen by the aga of the eunuchs, and if any one of these had the good fortune to attract his particular applause, this was marked by his throwing his handkerchief at her feet.

At this magic signal, the dancing stopped in an instant, and every other being glided out of the apartment.

The nourishment of these simple creatures being so light, the cost became a mere trifle, since the average expense of each person in the harem did not exceed three pounds sterling per annum. Thus it is not outraging truth to suppose, that the cost of the largest harem that ever was supported in modern times, has been outdone again and again, by the extravagance of a single wife in Britain.

The eunuchs, of course, receive no wages, being purchased slaves; the chief, it is true, had a small salary of some twelve pounds per annum, and in addition to this, the honour of riding out with the general. Two old women were also kept on the establishment, and paid for teaching embroidery and dancing.

Clarisse and Adele, as the two French damsels were named, frequently interrupted their various narrations to beg of Fitzjohn that he would use his influence with Seyd to get them their liberty; *La patrie* and *La belle France* were naturally and always in their imagination—and Fitz, entering deeply into what must have been their feelings, promised to see what could be done for them.

Accordingly, when Seyd Abderrimin came as usual for his evening grog, Fitzjohn told Jim to give him plenty of northing in it, at least N.N.W. This Jim did not fail to do, and as soon as our hero saw that it began to take effect, he proposed a purchase and finally closed it, by exchanging for the French ladies one of Joe Manton's double-barrelled guns. As soon as the Seyd had signed the order, Jim Bell and Bobbagee were despatched to the harem for "les dames Françaises," whilst Fitzjohn kept the general in play, lest he should change his mind.

Jim, faithful to his orders, returned with the fair comedians, and to prevent their being reclaimed, stowed them away until Seyd's departure, in his own private serai, which is always sacred to a Turk. The next morning our friends all got under weigh, as Jim called it; Clarisse and Adele having put on trowsers and tunics for the convenience of riding. They succeeded without any accident in arriving on board the Expedition, which he found half laden with live stock, and presents from the Sultaun for Fitzjohn and his crew.

In a few weeks after the Expedition put to sea, an opportunity occurred of giving the French ladies a passage in an empty transport returning to Bombay, from whence they proposed to proceed to Paris. Their parting with our hero was, as might have been expected, not a little droll. Though extremely anxious to regain their native country, there was evidently a slight penchant in the case. They both alternately hung round the neck of Gentleman Jack, as he stood on the gangway of his own vessel, kissing him and crying over him, and loading him with a whole host of those terms of love, endearment, and gratitude, of which their language is so rich.

At last they parted: they had a safe voyage, and Fitz ultimately received their own narration of their arrival in the French metropolis. Here for a time they were quite the rage; so much so, that even the First Consul deigned to see and joke them on the circumstances of their liberation by Gentleman Jack, whom he facetiously insisted must have been Jack the Giant Killer.

"Ah, monsieur general!" replied one of the arch dames, determined to defend her absent hero. "You only give him that name, because you were not there, otherwise you might have found him to be Jack *Catch*."

But madame's wit, as well as her beauty, has now somewhat subsided, and when I last saw herself and companion, they were sobered into two as respectable ladies as any in the *Rue Feydeau*.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FOR some days after the parting interview with *les dames Françaises*, as recorded in the last chapter, both our hero and Jim Bell experienced a sort of blank in their sea-existence, which made them wish *la belle France* at the devil. Here, also, it suggested itself to Fitzjohn, that his thoughts were guilty of no slight treachery to the image of Jane Wilson, in thus dwelling on those of the daughters of Gaul; and this had nearly reconciled him to his exiled lot, when he reflected that, for aught he knew, Jane Wilson might even now be married to another, and himself doomed never to see her more.

Here then he relapsed into his former state of despondency, when Jim Bell, who sat on the other side of the table in much the same state of mind, his hands plunged deep into his jacket pockets, suddenly roared out, "I say, Bo, I think we looks like a precious pair of spoonies! I wotes we have a glass of grog—N.W."

To this kindly hint Fitzjohn added that of a good cigar; and so, what with one consolation and another, these stricken deer managed, in the course of a week, greatly to mitigate their affliction.

Fitzjohn now proceeded on his original destination, and, keeping the inner passage, close to the land, discovered a fine island called Kameran, where he was able to procure an abundance of fresh water, and a safe anchorage. Had the war been continued in those seas, there is little doubt but that this island would have been purchased as a depôt for English merchandise and warlike stores.

While lying here at anchor, a plan occurred to Fitzjohn for opening a communication between our possessions in India and the mother country, by means of the Red Sea. As public attention is now strongly attracted by a similar project, it may not be uninteresting to give an outline of the scheme in question. In following out this last, the first step advised, is at once to purchase the island of Kameran, situated on the eastern coast of the Red Sea, in lat. $15^{\circ} 30'$, —long. $42^{\circ} 40'$, and make it a depôt for British merchandise. Two martello towers will defend the town as well as the anchorage of its principal bay, Kalla, in which a damaged vessel might heave down and be repaired, and where a vessel of six hundred tons, moored in the bay, would serve as a coal depôt.

Kalla, the principal bay in this island, is completely shut in and sheltered from almost every wind that blows, while from the sea it is equally protected by a coral reef. The water is deep close to the rocks, and there is plenty of fresh water near the landing-place. A large floating magazine of coals should be placed at Aden, anchoring in the eastern or back bay, on account of the monsoon, and by thus choosing Aden instead of Socotra, all expense of buildings, wharfs, governor, troops, &c., would be saved. The natives at Aden are particularly kind and attached to the English nation; fresh water and provisions are plentiful, and the climate healthy.

The service of the Red Sea would be as follows:—For steamers coming from India,—Complete with coals at Aden, as in either monsoon there is a very strong breeze through the straits of Babelmandel, then proceed to Kameran, which is two hundred and thirty miles from Aden, replenish with coals, and proceed to Suez, which is one thousand and sixty-five miles; land the letter-bag, at all seasons of the year, for Europe, at Cosseir, which is thirty-six hours' journey from Kennah, the nearest point of junction with the Nile. Here, as there is never *less* than two feet of water in the Nile in the driest seasons, and the stream always runs towards Alexandria, a light boat, or a small iron steamer, would convey the letters by the Nile nearly as soon as the passengers in the steamer would reach Suez. The passengers would take their time in proceeding from Suez to Alexandria, and embark there in the Company's following packet for Europe, or might proceed to Malta, and complete their quarantine, ready to land in any part of Europe. The letters *from* Europe would be embarked with the passengers at Suez throughout the year. The camels can travel from Alexandria to Suez in fifty-five hours.

From Aden to Calcutta the distance is three thousand three hundred and eighty miles. The stages for the renewal of fuel should therefore be as follows:—

From Aden to Underoot, one of the Laccadive Islands, where there is good anchorage and shelter from the southwest monsoon, the distance being fifteen hundred and sixty miles; from Underoot to Trincomalee, in the island of Ceylon, eight hundred and forty; from Trincomalee to Madras, two hundred and eighty, and from Madras to Bengal, seven hundred miles. In addition to this, a branch packet should ply between Underoot and Bombay, which is six hundred and forty miles, and one hundred miles from the nearest point of the Malabar coast. The passage from England to Calcutta would thus be made in *twenty-eight days* less time by *this* route, than by a *steam-vessel*, *viâ* the Cape of Good Hope, a circumstance of the greatest advantage to the British empire, in case a reinforcement of troops should be required in our East Indian possessions—and of incalculable benefit to our merchants, for whom the East India trade would become a matter of comparatively near vicinity.

The time required for the passage from London to Bengal would be as follows:—

	Days.
From London to Alexandria, touching at Gibraltar and Malta	21
From Alexandria, across the Desert, to Suez	2
From Suez to Bengal	47
Allowed for taking in coals at Kameran, Aden, Underoot, and Trincomalee, one day at each place	4
Total	74

At each station where coals are taken in, there should be good accommodations, and medical men of abilities, in case weak or sick passengers should desire to wait for the succeeding packet.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NOTHING is more dull than the duty of surveying; and for two years this creep-about, stagnating life was the fate of Gentleman Jack; varied only by a fight with a pirate dow, off the port of Suaken, which is a nest of pirates.

This vessel, or dow, was of some three hundred tons burden, rigged with an immense lateen sail. She came down with the land breeze early one morning; and being full of men, hoped to carry the Expedition by boarding her. But in Fitzjohn, the pirates had a foe that would have proved a match for any opponent.

He was well aware that any vessel, so rigged, could neither wear quickly, nor get stern way.

Having got under canvas himself, Fitz therefore placed the Expedition on the weather beam of the Arab: then backing all his sails, and wearing short round on his heel, he managed to get several broadsides at the enemy before she could near him; which having cut away his main hal-yards, by that good fortune which British tars always find to favour the brave, down came the Arab's sails.

Fitz now made the captain and seven of his officers go on board the Expedition. These he kept as hostages, until he had unshipped the Arab's rudder; after which he took his prize in tow, and delivered him up to the sheriff of

Judda, who, in the Turkish mode of squaring accounts, took all hands,—one hundred and thirty men,—and, without troubling judge or jury, shortened the good gentlemen by the head, and then laid them by, till next wanted.

At Mocha, the Expedition being required for another service, Fitz resigned his command, and “retired,” as newspapers say of a fallen minister, “into the elegant domesticity of private life.” In other words, his traps were taken on board the *Rumbly*, and shoved down into the cockpit, and all the orlop was once more his own. This magnificent sample of her class having been refitted at Bombay, where Fitz experienced the usual kindness of his old friend, Sir Edward C——, she duly made St. Helena, that immortal monument to the cruelty of our ministers, and the apathy of ourselves. At length, to the unspeakable joy of all on board, they struck soundings in the British Channel: They now calculated on speedily arriving in the beautiful Sound of Plymouth, but little imagined how much they had to go through, ere that termination to their voyage could be attained.

The excitement produced on board a man-of-war at a moment such as I am describing, is almost inconceivable to those who have never been placed in a position to experience it. In the present case, the *Rumbly* had been four years on a foreign and not very healthy station, and now that home of which all hands had, in their weary wanderings, so fondly dreamed, seemed once more to welcome them to its bosom. *Old England*, those watchwords of memory and feeling, rose with her rugged dusky shores at a few leagues' length from their battered ship.

They who had fainted on the burning sands of Syria, might soon quench their thirst in the silver brooks of Devon. Their scars would be their honours, and past sufferings bring their own reward. The hands of love and affection would bind up their wounds, and wait upon their weakness, and before their country again called upon them for their true and arduous services, there was to be a holiday—a vacation—a long elysium of joy and delight, worth whole lives of pain, and of which no one would deprive them. They recalled to mind how many of their gallant shipmates had sunk beneath the sword of the enemy, and the pestilence-breeding heat of the climate they had quitted; but

even regret for the dead only enhanced to the living the value of those blessings they soon hoped to know.

Neither could experience of the past teach them to look forward with dread to the future; they saw not the desolation which four years had brought on many of those hearths around whose sacred fires their best feelings had quickened into being,—the mother whose claims the grief of widowhood had doubled on their love; or the favourite sister whom consumption was taking for ever from it. These, and a thousand other calamities, some portion of which each must soon bear, they heeded not. There was *Old England*, and soon their long cooped-up limbs might once more freely wander on that land, their intense love of which had enabled them, in the words of the glorious Dibdin,—“To fight and to conquer again and again.”

Where was the brain that could sleep on thoughts such as these? It was impossible. The ship's bells sounded one o'clock in the morning, but the decks of the *Rumbly* were crowded with all her crew. Messmates shook hands with messmates, and congratulations were echoed on all sides, as the dim outline of the land grew stronger and more distinct upon the weather-bow.

The sick left their hammocks and dragged their weak and wounded limbs to the port-holes, from whence they drew fresh health and strength, with those delicious gales which had so lately left their native country: even the very dogs crowded to the gangway, and, snuffing the land-breeze, shared in the general gladness.

The ship was now stretching along for the Lizard Point, close hauled, and under all the sail she could carry; a brisk breeze was blowing from the N.N.E., and though the weather was not the most clear they could desire, there were no appearances in the atmosphere to warrant any anticipation of what followed. Had the weather-glasses in the captain's cabin been consulted, they might have foretold a different result. But the hearts of all were too full even for foreboding.

“Very well thys no higher,” suddenly cried the commodore, who was standing at the weather-gangway conning his own ship, and observed the weather leach of the foretop-sail shake a cloth in the wind. The words had scarcely left his lips, and the men at the helm were in the very act

of obeying the order thus given, when the wind veering round several points with a sudden squall, the Rumbly was taken flat aback; a sudden clap like that of thunder was heard forward, as the whole fury of the gust came in its new direction on the distended sails. An awful crash followed, with scarcely a moment's intermission, and Fitzjohn, who was standing just before the mainmast, beheld the whole pile of canvas on the fore-topmast fall over the lee-bow with a heavy crash, dragging the flying-jibboom with it.

With a quickness that his responsible and frequent duties as prize-master had given him, he cried to some of his brother mids who were standing near them, "Let go the maintop gallant sheets;" then flying himself to the maintop-sail halyards, he cast these off, and the maintop-sail yard descended from its place almost before Sir High Topham was aware of what had happened. This, however, was no time for thanking our hero for having saved the main topmast, which was bending like a whip; the loose canvas of the topsail pressing against it, and preventing the full descent of the yard, still held the wind.

"Man the topsail clew-lines," cried the commodore; but Fitz had already clapped some hands on them. In a few minutes the reluctant yard was brought down upon its cap; the flapping topgallant sails and mizen topsail clewed up, the ship edged off from the gale, the courses taken off her, and storm stay-sails, try-sail, and fore-stay-sail set.

The wreck caused by this disaster having with some difficulty been cleared away, it was found that two unhappy marines, who were standing on the lee-booms, had been struck dead by the fall of the topmast, and seven seamen more or less wounded.

The wind continuing to shift round to the S.E., and the ship having been nearly abreast, and not far distant from the Lizard, when the accident occurred, they now found themselves rapidly driving within that dreaded and shelterless part of the channel known by the name of the Mount's Bay.

The idea of coming from a four years' station in a tropical climate, and being wrecked within a few hours' sail of port, in a south-easterly gale, and on the Cornish coast, presented at once an epitome of all that was horrible to a

sailor's mind. As Fitzjohn thought of the iron-bound and havenless shore, within whose terrific embayment his ship was being driven, he thought of what would be the agonised feelings of his mother, if, instead of receiving her son's embrace, the next day's papers should bear the intelligence that all hands had been cast away upon the rocks of St. Michael.

That any one should even live to tell his shipmates' tale was not to be imagined, if the Rumbly once took the ground. Their only hopes, therefore, rested on that most unstable of all elements, the wind. If this increased, or shifted round more to the southward, they might reach the shore, it is true, but it could only be for burial.

As Sir High Topham looked around him and saw how his late hopes were blasted, and soon to be, perhaps, altogether annihilated, bitterly did he curse the infamous and heartless sluggishness of ministers, who, over and over again, had been importuned by our highest naval officers to take advantage of the natural opportunities which existed in this very Mount's Bay for a safe and splendid harbour.

"No!" thought the commodore, "I, and my brave followers, may toil and fight—destroy our health—throw away our blood like water, and go through sufferings in India which make the soul sick to recall, and here, on our return, at the very threshold of our doors, as it were, we are to be cast away, because a few thousands cannot be spared from the bribing of placemen, to secure for us a harbour, in a position where, above every other in Britain, one is most wanted. Well, we are only five hundred, and if we go, I suppose they will take care the press-gangs shall prevent our loss from being felt too deeply."

As these bitter but far from unjust thoughts came across him, his eye rested on St. Michael's Mount. "Had Lord St. Vincent's plan of a breakwater been followed," murmured he to himself, "*there* would have been the spot, where, in another hour, my ship and crew might be riding in safety. Now, if we are driven but two miles nearer that shore, every soul on board is lost."

Alas! on how many a gallant and devoted seaman have these very reflections pressed, with—if it be possible—even more of the bitterness of death than they now did on Sir High Topham! Many and many a fine fellow, that never

quailed before the tide of war, has shrunk from the horrid fate that awaited him in this same bay.

One would imagine that our mariners have deserved better at our hands than to have their interests so poorly cared for, that it should be left for private enterprise, and the public spirit of a commercial company, to achieve that undertaking, for which a Cornwallis and a St. Vincent continued to petition in vain; nay, and more—for want of which thousands of British sailors have been wantonly sacrificed to the fury of the storm. But to the wants and sufferings of this portion of the community are directed the attention of those not less beneficent than they are powerful, and not more powerful than they are beloved.* It is not, therefore, too much to hope, that in the brightness of that fair star, which has yet to rise, Old England's navy may again see better times.

Return we to our tale. Never, amidst all his vicissitudes, had Fitzjohn passed a night of more deeply-anxious—I may well say, dreadful solicitude—not a soul left the deck of the Rumbly who could possibly remain on it. The fate of all hands hung seemingly upon so mere a chance, that the most careless of life could not direct his attention from the dread issue, which every moment brought nearer home.

After a long period of strenuous and unrelenting labour, a foretop-mast was rigged, as much canvas shown to the gale as could possibly be made to stand; and when morning broke, the Rumbly was nearly out of sight of land, and seemingly running back into the Atlantic. Having now plenty of sea room, the ship was hove-to.

The south-east gales, on our western coast, are almost always violent, but seldom of long duration. The violence of the one in question was certainly quite sufficient for any

* I allude to the patronage which, with their usual consideration, has been bestowed by more than one member of the royal family, on the plan for a new breakwater in the bay alluded to above—Mount's Bay. For a detailed description of this project, I must refer my reader to an article in the "Nautical Magazine." I have a shrewd guess at the writer; and however unable to rival, perhaps he will permit me to join with him in wishing every success to this truly noble undertaking. I sincerely hope that parliament will sanction the placing of a slight impost on this breakwater, as the shareholders in such a national benefit have a claim on the public for the most ample remuneration that can be given.

moderate-minded man, but in little more than eight-and-forty hours it had blown its strength out. The commodore, hoping now for better fortune, once more made sail, and succeeded, to his great joy, in reaching Plymouth without any further hindrances.

While the *Rumbly* was yet running past the lovely shores of Mount Edgecumbe, previous to her anchoring in Barn Pool, Sir High Topham called Fitz to him, and tapping him on the shoulder, said, "Go you below and dress, and I'll take you ashore and introduce you to the admiral, not only as a spare, but also as a good save-topmast on occasions."

CHAPTER XXXIV

WITH the very first opportunity, Fitzjohn obtained leave to repair to London, not only for the pleasure of once more returning to the cherished and sole relative whom he had ever seen, but also with the intention of passing that examination for his lieutenancy, for which he was now qualified.

The joy of Lady Fitzjohn on again beholding him was excessive; nor was Fitzjohn less pleased to find his mother almost as beautiful, and quite as sensible, as when they last parted.

The first week of Fitzjohn's stay in Arlington Street, was taken up with such a round of gaieties, that he never thought of the old gentleman at Somerset House. One morning, however, on returning from a ride, he found the card of Sir High Topham on his mother's table. Having made my lady sit down and write a note, requesting the pleasure of the commodore's company at dinner that day, or on the first for which he was not otherwise engaged, he hurried off in his mother's carriage, which was waiting at the door, to seek his gallant commander at his lodgings.

These were situated somewhere in the vicinity of Portman Square; and as the coachman was driving slowly along, endeavouring to ascertain the number of the house—on the wrong side of the street of course—Fitz felt some one give him a confounded poke on the shoulder from the

other. He turned round, and there stood the commodore himself.

"I say, Master Gentleman Jack, you're what your mess-mate, Mr. Bell, would call 'cutting it fat.'"—"Yes, Sir High, I am; but the slice was for you. My mother wishes to know if she can have the pleasure of your company to dinner?"

"To be sure, my boy, any of those small favours. Can she let me sit down as I am, d'ye think, or must I fig out?"—"As you are, sir."

"Then make room beside you, for my coachman's sick; Thomas is gone off on leave; and even my butler takes his time in coming to one's call. But, I say, Master Gentleman Jack," quoth Sir High, as soon as he was seated, "have you passed your examination yet?"—"No, sir; for what with balls and routs——"

"I'll hear of none of them, save the first be red-hot balls and the second the routs of the enemy. D'ye hear me, young man, get yourself ready as quickly as may be. Tomorrow morning I go and put your name down for Saturday next. Let me see, then, you'll just have three days to prepare yourself."

Fitzjohn now knew that the thing was settled, and took his measures accordingly. On the appointed morning, our hero found himself in the hall of the doomed, at Somerset House; one of twenty-nine unhappy midshipmen to be examined on that day; his name standing second on the list for examination.

The weather being warm, the door of the examining-room was left ajar, and as the first aspirant entered, Fitzjohn kept cruising in the passage, ready to follow as soon as he was called; as well as, at the same time, to catch the course of the examiners, through the crack of the unshut door.

The first examined was a sturdy mate, who had served nearly two years over his time, and having been frequently sent as prize-master in various captured craft, did not anticipate much difficulty. After a variety of questions, one of the examiners, in a gruff and stern voice, said to him,—

"Now, sir, you are running into Spithead before the wind, under a press of canvas, to get your anchorage before dark; suddenly a thick fog comes on;—what would you

do?"—"Do, sir?" says the mate; "clew all up, and let go the anchor."

"Very properly; but how would you do it?"—"I should let go the small bower."

"But the cable is carried away."—"I should then let go my best bower."

"That don't bring her up."—"Then I'd let go my sheet anchor."

"That goes to the bottom," says the examiner; "but there's no cable bent to it?"—"O! that, sir, I have nothing to do with," said the mate; "that's the boatswain's lookout."

"Then, sir," said the same examining voice, "you'll just be pleased to go and *look out* for yourself for another six months. D—— me if ever I'll sign a certificate for any one that can't get his own sheet-cable bent, and see to it himself also, when he's coming to his anchorage."—"I sha'n't forget it another time, sir," says the mate.

"No, no: that I'll answer for it you won't, not for six months to come; therefore go along, sir; no more of your chat here."

The grumbling mate hereupon left the room, having previously collected up his journals and certificates, and returned to the others who were waiting their turns for a call. He no sooner, however, got back into the hall than he tipped them such a yarn as set them all in a terrible funk, but without ever saying what was the real cause of his being sent back.

Fitzjohn was now called in, and having been entrusted with the command of two vessels, he felt pretty certain of his seamanship, while having also spent some years in a survey of the Red Sea, he had not much doubt of his navigation.

The examiners' court was composed of three persons in post-captains' uniforms. A tall, straight, stiff man, whom they called Sir Isaac Catacomb, sat in the middle; a squab, red-faced person, with a quid of backy in his cheek, was placed on Sir Isaac's right-hand; and a pale, gentlemanly, meagre officer sat on his left.

"Is Mr. Fitzjohn's time all right?" said the president to the clerk.—"Yes, sir; and a few days over."

"Only a *few days* over!" quoth Captain Quid; "why

then you couldn't have finished your six years when you left your ship?"—"Yes, sir, I believe I had," replied Fitz, who was not at all aware how nearly he had "shaved the matter;" "I left my ship last week, sir, and my certificates were lodged before I arrived in town."

"And," says the clerk, "there have been two leap years, so that he has quite completed his time."

Now, Fitzjohn's mother had, with her usual foresight, provided him with a letter of introduction, addressed to Sir Isaac Catacomb, but an opportunity had not offered of sending it in beforehand; and Fitzjohn, seeing that Quid was determined to be hard on him, thought of presenting it to the president, to whom it was addressed, and kept fumbling it in his pocket, irresolute what he should do.

"So, Mr. What's-your-name," said Quid, "you are one of Jack Pleasant's mids; ay, and I hear that you've been called, too, in some of your ships, 'Gentleman Jack.' I suppose that means you're too much of a gentleman to be a sailor—eh? Master Pleasant was just the sort of fellow to breed such kind of bantams. He was one of your fine-weather birds; went to sea when he liked—always the way with your cursed fellows, who have what's called 'good interest.'"—"His health, sir, was latterly very delicate," said Fitzjohn; "and if *he* didn't go to sea, the ship *did*. She wasn't kept like a pleasure yacht, for the captain."

"You are d——d sharp, Master Jackanapes, I think," said Quid. Looking down the list of servitude, he presently espied the name of Topham. "O, ho!" said he, "how long have you been star-gazing with Topham?" alluding to a great hobby with Sir High, astronomy.—"Four years, sir," replied Fitzjohn.

"Then, I suppose, you expect to be astronomer royal, don't you?"—"No objection, sir, if it's a good berth."

"There will not, surely, be much occasion to examine this young gentleman, I suppose," said Sir Isaac. "As he has already been entrusted with such commands, his superiors must have been satisfied of his abilities."

The meagre captain on the president's left-hand, to this, nodded assent; but Quid seemed determined not to let him off so easily. Pretending not to hear, therefore, what Sir Isaac had said, he went on with his examination.

"Have you ever served in a line-of-battle ship with the fleet?" said Quid, "or have you always been Pall Malling it and yachting it in fine weather?"—"I have served in two ships of the line, sir," said Fitzjohn; "the *George and Impetus*."

"Where were you cruising?"—"In the Bay of Biscay, and off the Black Rocks."

"Did you ever see the fleet tack in succession?"—"Yes, sir."

"Which line tacked first?"—"The weather line, sir, led by the commander-in-chief; and when the second ship in the weather line tacked, the leading ship of the lee line tacked at the same time."

"Well, sir; now you have charge of your ship, your captain is love-sick, or cruising in St. James's Street; and you being first lieutenant, you are sailing in *close* line of battle, and the admiral makes the signal to tack in succession. You have all sail set, by the wind, and there's a bobble of a sea on; put your ship about."—"Am I the leading ship, or not, sir?"

"Leading ship! No, sir; the fourth in the weather line."—"Very good, sir. When the ship a-head of me is full on the other tack, and I've got her three masts into one, I haul down the jib, fearing she may miss stays."

"Three nasts into one, sir; you'll be d——ly to leeward if you don't open her weather side first, sir."—"No, sir, I don't think I shall."

"But I say you will."—"I beg your pardon, Captain Quid," said the president, "keeping close line of battle, it's always right to tack at the time the young gentleman says."

"Well, well!—it's not my way at any rate," returned Quid; "but get on, sir."—"Well, then, sir; having brought the three masts into one, as soon as I am about,* sir, I hoist the jib, and edge down into the wake of the ship a-head."

"But you're not about, sir. There's your crossjack-yard, sir, won't haul round; the yard-arm has got within the main-topmast-back-stay; how do you clear it, sir?"—"I haul the brace well taut, and belay it, then send a couple of hands out to the yard-arm to foot the back-stay out again."

"That won't do, so you must clear it some other way."

* "About"—that is, as soon as I have tacked.

—"Why, sir; if the fleet were tacking in line of battle, and I feared that the delay might leave an opening in the line for the enemy to break through, I would cut it."

"D——n you, sir! What! cut the king's stores! That's the way with you yacht men, you're so devilish handy with your knives. By Jove, sir, if I was your captain I'd cut your back, sir, and write to the navy-board to stop it against your pay."—"Recollect, sir," said Fitjohn, getting rather angry at this language, "you told me I was first lieutenant, and commanding officer—you dare not, and could not therefore have put your threats into execution."

"That's nothing to the purpose—go on, sir."—"Well, then, sir, as soon as the cross jack-yard was clear, I'd haul it round and brace it to the wind."

"Yes, sir; but I say the cross jack-yard is *not* clear. I'll have no cutting, by Jove; you must clear it some other way."—"Well, sir, I'd slacken the lanyard of the back-stay until it was cleared by the men on the yard-arm."

"Then, d——n me, sir, if you wouldn't lose your main-topmast."—"Pardon me, sir, the back-stay in question has become the lee one."

"That won't do, I tell you, sir; you must clear it some other way."—"Then, sir, I would clew up the mizen-top-sail, and top the yard up and down until it was cleared."

"This comes," says Quid, with a knowing wink, as if he'd done something very clever, "of these new-fangled modes of rigging ships; when the top-mast back-stay was set up on a double dead-eye with the after-main shroud, these accidents never happened." But still, Master Quid never decided which, out of the only four plans of action, was the best.

"Well, Mr. Fitz-Fitz, what's your name," resumed he, after a breathing pause; "there's nothing goes down but Fitzes; it's better to be a spinster's flyblow now than an officer's son. The service is going to the devil. Now, Mr. Fitz-thing-um-bob! get your ship underweigh."—"Yes, sir; first the orders are—turn the hands up; carpenters, ship and pin the bars;—swab-wringers, bring the nippers—bring-to the messenger—unbit the cable—drummer and fifer under the half-deck, get ready—master reports all ready for heaving. Heave round, my lads, a steady step, and beat time with your feet; boatswain pipes——"

"Stop, sir," said Quid, with an oath, interrupting Fitz, "you forget your capstan's pawled; how the devil can the men heave round?"—"They will soon find that out, sir."

"Yes, sir; but you must think for them. Another six months' cruise would do you no harm, sir."

Both the other captains here shook their heads in dissent. "Come, come, don't be too hard, Captain Quid," said the president; "this young gentleman must be quite *au fait* at his profession, after his experience in actual command."

"Well, gentlemen, as you please; but when he goes out, he will say that the examination was nothing at all."

"Very well, then, if you fear that, it can do him no harm to get his ship under weigh."

"Where are we, sir?" said Quid.—"I have just ordered the capstan to be unpawled."

"No, no, sir; I did it for you. Well, go on, sir."—"Yes, sir; the men heave on merrily, and with good cheerful hearts, as they always did with Jack Pleasant; and the anchor is at the hawse-hole."

"None of your Serpentine River sailors, or your yachtmen, for me," interrupted Quid. "Well, sir, your anchor is at the hawse-hole; go on, sir."—"I hook on the cat."

"Don't forget," said Quid, "to stick out your cable."—"No, sir, I won't, when the catfall is taut."

"How much cable, sir?" said Quid, "would you stick out?"—"That depends on the size of the ship, sir," replied Fitzjohn.

"The ship, sir!" said Quid; "what difference would that make? If you stick out sufficient till the anchor plumbs the cat-head, it will always do."—"I beg your pardon, sir; it won't do in a three-decker: it requires a fathom more at least, the cat-head is so much further from the hawse-hole."

"Are you going to dictate to me, sir?" said Quid; "don't I know what I know, after so many years' service?" Then, after hesitating for a few minutes—"Well, gentlemen, I think we may now sign his certificate."

To this welcome proposal the other captains nodded assent; and, as soon as Fitzjohn had got his journals under his arm, and was going out, he stepped up to the president and gave him the letter of introduction. "Make my best compliments," said the president, in reply, and bowed him out.

Fitzjohn lingered at the door, and as the president put the letter into Quid's hand, he heard the latter say, "By G—, if I had known that, d——n me but I would have kept him half an hour longer; what the devil have women to do with it?"

As soon as Fitzjohn got into the room where the rest were waiting, the many questions asked were scarcely answered and explained, when one of them said, "O, that ere Quid is a regular rum'un, he goes by the name of Billy Bother'em, and as he gets a guinea a-day, which the Admiralty allows these here passing skippers, the longer he keeps us, and the more he turns back, the better for him."

In those days, it was customary to get together some half-pay captains, who were constantly in the Admiralty-hall on the look-out for a job, and it was a sort of patronage to the junior Lords to employ them. They were allowed a guinea a-day each; and, if there were a tolerable number of *aspirants*, it was very hard if they did not make five days of it. The examination was consequently very severe, except in the navigation part of it; of which, in general, they knew nothing.

As Fitzjohn's mother had given him leave to invite his own party to dinner, Fitz collected together about twenty middies, either of his former acquaintance or of those he met at the examination; and, as my lady was requested *not* to dine with them, they had, to use their own words, "a proper fling," or what Sir Andrew Agnew would have termed an improper fling. The wine flew merrily round, and the first toast after dinner was, "A merry d——n to old Quid." Having taken as much liquor on board as they could stow away, they sallied out for a "spree." Most of them slept in the watch-house, and Fitzjohn was brought home in a dust-cart. This was owing to a Gentleman-Jackish sort of roll in the mud, which rendered him too dirty to be taken in by any hackney-coach—three whole stands of which were very carefully examined, but positively refused to have anything to do with him.

A few hours sleep, however, brought him to himself; and, as soon as he had got quite "to rights," he went to the examination-room, and obtained his certificate of having passed.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FITZJOHN, having procured the necessary document alluded to in the last chapter, hastened to take it home, and place it in security before setting forth on the amusements of the day. In these, however, he was somewhat suddenly checked, by finding Sir High Topham in Arlington Street. The commodore told him that the Rumbly was ordered round to Portsmouth to be paid off; and, having congratulated our hero on passing his examination, and enjoyed a hearty laugh at old Quid, he offered to take Fitz down with him to his ship on the ensuing day, and then took his departure.

When left alone, Fitz began to think what he should do. The command of a privateer had been offered him through a friend, on the part of some English merchants, who had fitted her out for the South American station. But, before he would accept of this, he determined to set his mother at work that very morning, to find out what chance he had of promotion.

This question was soon solved, and all his fears of being forthwith lieutenantated were set at rest. Having learnt this at dinner, he no sooner rose from table, than he called on his friend, and accepted the captaincy of the Chance privateer. The variety of the life he knew would please him; he had sailed under Topham long enough, and was too sick of a midshipman's berth, to relish the idea of brooking all its disagreeables, under any strange captain that might turn up.

Sir High Topham did not seem altogether to take the same views; but our hero had no sooner arrived on board the Rumbly, and communicated his intention to Jim Bell, than he expressed the utmost regret that he could not join in the scheme, since, only the day before Fitzjohn's arrival, he had been over-persuaded to join a man-of-war brig, called the Violent, under promise of speedy promotion. At this Fitz was equally vexed; but as the matter could not be altered, they both laid their heads together as to how our hero should proceed.

"The only thing, Jim, that puzzles me," said Fitz, "is where to get good men."

"Oh! crikey, Bill! I'll soon settle that matter," responded Jim. "Going ashore last night, who should I run alongside of but old Pipes. Only have him as your boatswain, and he'll soon get plenty of good hands for you."

This hint appeared to Fitz so good, that he that night paid a visit to his old shipmate, who was just existing in a kind of cock-loft. The agreement was soon settled on Fitzjohn's terms; our hero promising, that in consideration of his, Pipes', full and complete regret for his former habits of drunkenness, Fitzjohn would dub him boatswain, and use his influence to get him reinstated, if he conducted himself well during the two years it was intended that the *Chance* should be absent.

The difficulty of getting a crew together at that period of the war, or rather of carrying to sea such crews as were collected, was great, almost beyond belief. Fitzjohn, therefore, as soon as he had fitted out the *Chance* ready for sea, got her manned, and taking his leave of Jim Bell, was obliged, on account of the continued impress from men-of-war, to lie off Ryde, so that being completed in stores and provisions, her crew might come on board at once from the shore, where they were secreted, and sail within the same hour if possible.

The ship in question, in which we are now to follow our hero's history, had formerly been a Spanish packet, and was built almost entirely of mahogany, being of four hundred and thirty tons burthen. She was armed with sixteen long nine-pounders, and a crew, including captain, mates, and all hands, of ninety-eight men,—partly composed, it is true, of the scum of England; but, notwithstanding, all "brave hearts and good seamen," or at least such Fitzjohn's system of discipline soon made them.

The middle of October was the time fixed for her departure, but it was necessary to wait for a dark night, with drizzling rain, before she could venture to put to sea, as the men-of-war lying at Spithead were only watching for an opportunity of pouncing on her crew by coming on board and impressing the greater part of them.

At last a favourable night presented itself, and at two A.M., whilst Fitz was in the act of casting the ship's head to run through the Needles, a man-of-war's jolly boat, with four men,

and a *said-to-be* officer, swept up alongside and boarded her. Fortunately, this officer proved to be only a warrant-officer, and Fitzjohn, on his first presenting himself, having in vain inquired for his commission and impress-warrant, had no hesitation in refusing him permission to search the *Chance*.

My gentleman being thus disarmed, and without authority, was given to understand that he had better return to his ship for the same. Upon his refusing so to do, he received a broad hint that a few round shot *could* be dropped into his boat, which *might* go through her bottom. This gentle insinuation was not lost upon him: he most prudently shoved off his boat, and a few hours saw the *Chance* safely out at sea.

There is, perhaps, no naval command so difficult as that of a privateer. In the case of the *Chance*, her crew was composed of all nations, containing, amongst the rest, four French seamen, and six Spanish. The first task that presented itself was the necessary one of establishing a system of discipline where the cat-o'-nine-tails must not be used. Stopping the grog and rations of fighting men who were obliged to be out and aloft in all weathers, was a course too ridiculous to be contemplated for a moment. The punishment for drunkenness (which is the root of all evil in a fighting ship) was decided to be, that of setting the drunkard on the fore-castle, lashed to the fid-hole of the spare topmast, which lies on the booms, then placing a yellow night-cap on his head, and making him the derision of the whole ship's company for forty-eight hours. If this did not effect a cure, Fitz had recourse to solitary confinement for three days, in the boatswain's store-room, on bread and water, which system he found very effectually to answer the end proposed.

Idleness and neglect of orders he invariably punished by giving the culprit double duty; sleeping on the look-out was punished by a mulct of a small percentage in the pound of the wages, which were put into a poor-box to buy vegetables and fresh meat for the sick.

Disobedience, or insolence to an officer, was a crime of magnitude, and, after a due conviction of the fact before a jury, composed of one mate, the boatswain, a quartermaster, and two captains of the tops, it was punished by double spells at working the pumps; if that duty was not

required, the offender was obliged to keep his watch with a crow-bar over his shoulder. Insolence to the captain was punished by the rebel being sent to Coventry by all the ship's company, and made to mess by himself on a grating for such a time as was decided on by the captain himself.

From knowing the results of this system, then, it is to be hoped that some amelioration of our present mode of flogging may not be far distant, and that, at least, the horrible torture of sending a poor wretch through the fleet will be abolished. Our humane monarch has himself been a seaman, and no one can form a better opinion on the subject than himself. Surely that more rational, yet equally effective punishment, of solitary confinement, with hard labour, might be substituted for such a time as the judgment of a court-martial should think fit. But even this punishment should not be carried to excess, so that the seaman should return to the service, and by telling his sufferings and feelings to his former shipmates, warn them from incurring a similar degradation.

A system of rewards was also established in the Chance, and found to produce most admirable results. Increased leave on shore, and indulgences in the ship, were granted to those men whose conduct deserved this preference, while exercise and utility were so combined as at once to tend to the health of the ship's company, as well as to their usefulness and expertness in the day of battle. That hurtful and foolish usage of washing decks *before breakfast*, was also abolished, as it tends only to cramp the feet and the energies of the men, and make them ill.

At six bells, that is to say, at seven o'clock, every morning, the men were turned out, that they might have time to shake their bedding, sweep out their berths, and bathe on the fore-castle, if in a mild climate, before their breakfast. After breakfast, the whole of the decks were washed and cleaned, above and below, by the watches on or off deck, as the case required, and when there was a general wash below, that opportunity was embraced of exercising the men with the engine, pump, and buckets, as if the ship was on fire, a practice suggested to Fitz by the narrow escape he had experienced in the powder-vessel, and one which is too much neglected in a man-of-war. At one o'clock, the ship's com-

pany dined, and at seven they had supper, so that there was a better division of meals than is the usual custom.

In addition to this routine, the great guns were exercised every evening before supper, but for half an hour *only*, by which means the men learnt their exercise, and were not disgusted by its fatigue. Boarding, and the use of the cutlass and fire-arms, were taught at convenient intervals; while Sunday was set apart for the performance of divine service, and the afternoon given up to the men. Of this, many of them availed themselves to mend their clothes, a practice to which Fitz did not take it upon himself to object, as he viewed it as a sort of drawing the ass out of the ditch.

In order to prevent confusion and loss of time, by the men calling out each other's names, the fighting and active part of the crew, consisting of eighty men, were formed by Fitz into eight divisions, each division consisting of ten men, and those men numbered, so that a large or small portion of those divisions were easily and simply called or sent on the service required.

For example, if fifteen men were wanting, the orders were, for the even numbers of the first, third, and sixth division, "Prepare to do such a duty;" or, "Board the enemy on the bow with the whole of the first and second division; and on the quarter with the fifth and seventh division;"—"The third and sixth divisions will use fire-arms." Again, as ten manned a gun, together with that one opposite to it, so when any particular gun was not wanted, the division which belonged to it could perform other duties, instead of weakening *all* the guns, by taking away so many from each, as is the case on board men-of-war.

In a line-of-battle ship, your boarders being generally two from each gun, it is next to impossible to get them together, for twenty minutes or half-an-hour, and those who arrive first, stand to be shot at by the small-arm men in the enemy's tops, until the others arrive. All this confusion would, however, be avoided if the whole of certain guns' crews were boarders, and acted upon that intended mode of attack, as soon as each of these crews had discharged their gun and secured it. Every man on board the *Chance* was also taught to row and swim, and the crew

so stationed, that when a boat left the ship on service, part of the watch on deck always manned her.

Having fairly sailed down channel, at a distance of thirty leagues to the westward of Scilly, the *Chance* fell in with a cutter and lugger closely engaged; and, what was most extraordinary, each vessel had French colours flying. The rig of the lugger gave her a decided advantage over the cutter, who had no square topsails; so that the lugger ranged up on his weather-quarter, let fly his broadside into her, and then easing off his sheets, dropped astern to reload. Pipes, having looked on at the fight for a short time, gave his breeches a hitch, and then delivered it as his opinion, that "the cutter had his bellyful, and was shearing off."

As a privateer's duty is never to court a fight, but, on the contrary, to avoid it, unless in self-defence, the *Chance* closed on the combatants more from curiosity than any other object. On nearing the cutter, which was much crippled, they found that she hailed from Guernsey; upon which the *Chance* hoisted English colours, and the lugger did the same; and on sending a boat to each, Fitzjohn found that they were both Guernsey vessels, who had mistaken each other for French craft, a mistake which, *on dit*, frequently happened during the last war.

After being chased by several English men-of-war, from all of which the *Chance* ran as from an enemy,—Fitz fearing the impressment of his men,—our hero at last safely arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, there to take in his last supply, previously to making his ultimate destination.

Finding, however, at the Cape, several English men-of-war at anchor, he shaped his course for New South Wales, and there completed his vessel in provisions and water, finally arriving off the coast of South America in the most favourable season of the year.

As there is a constant swell on this coast, it must be approached with the greatest prudence, more particularly since there is little or no anchorage near the shore. At this period of the war, the difficulty of transporting silver to England was so great, that the meanest utensils were made of pure virgin silver; while the inhabitants of the coast were so ignorant of the art of war, that towns and

cities were sacked, and contributions levied, at the smallest risk.

Most of the towns on the South American coast have their churches built in the centre of them; so that the privateers, by landing a party in the middle of the beautiful nights of that climate, used to get possession of this edifice, and daylight showed the astonished natives forty well-armed men on its battlements.

The alcaide, or mayor, was then made to put in his personal appearance, as were also some of the leading men of the town. These, with all gentleness, were taken on board the *Chance*, until it was decided how much per head, in *weight* of silver, should be paid for the ransom of the town. This generally amounted to twenty dollars a head for the inhabitants, which, besides the plunder of the gold, and silver, and images, soon made the crew of the *Chance* tolerably rich.

One day, Mr. Pipes being despatched with a strong party to relieve a cathedral, which stood further in-shore than usual, his return became delayed beyond the ordinary and necessary time. Fitzjohn, fearing that Mr. Pipes had been splicing the main brace a little too freely, landed with almost the whole remainder of the privateer's crew. Fitz having neared the city, which so unhappily stood in need of Pipes' relief, observed, at a distance, a great crowd of people, with a fat Spanish priest in front, marching slowly out towards the boats; while Pipes, swaggering behind the worthy ecclesiastic, had one hand thrust into his breeches' pocket, with a pistol presented in the other, at the priest's back—one of the Spanish seamen acting, moreover, as interpreter.

On reaching this amiable party, the first words that Fitzjohn could make out were, "Tell him I will, Domingo," addressing the Spanish sailor by his name,—“blow me tight if I won't, if he don't fust out, in a crack, them there diamond eyes,—hang me but I will.”

“Will do what?” inquired Fitzjohn.

“Why, fire slap into him, your honour.”

As orders had been strictly given, that the greatest caution should be used to avoid hurting any of the natives, and that resort should never be had to firing upon them, but upon occasions of absolute self-defence, Fitzjohn made

the party halt, and proceeded coolly to investigate the whole affair, since the reinforcement which he had brought with him removed all possibility of doubt, if an appeal to arms became necessary.

The inquiry being commenced with Pipes, he began by saying, "Do you see that ere big building there, your honour?" pointing to the cathedral;—"well, close aboard of that ere, is what they call the 'quisition house," meaning the inquisition. "Well, in there I goes, soon after I and my chicks first boards this here place, thinking they might be sarving it out to them ere papishes: the first thing I claps my eyes on, was a blessed large silver himmage of a figure, bigger than our figure-head, and as tall as the ensign-staff. Holloa! down comes you, thinks I; but how the blazes to lower him down without rigging a derrick, would puzzle a Filidelfy lawyer. At last, thinks I, I'll clap a timber hitch around both his legs, and we'll soon rouse him down from his perch. So as I was just taking another squint at him, I saw his peepers," (meaning his eyes,) "sparkling away like good uns. Says I, 'Domingo, as you understand their lingo, ax that ere fat priest, who I takes to be the governor, whether them ere sparklers are real diamonds.' To which he says, 'Si, signor,' which I knows enough of the lingo to know, means 'Yes.' 'Blow me, how waluble they must be!' says I. 'Now my lads,' says I, 'a rouse altogether, and we'll have him down, the sparklers alone would buy up our privateer any day.' So having fixed the hawser with a timber-hitch, I makes all hands tail on to it, and with a 'One, two, three, yeo ho!' down he comes, but with such a devil of a wop on the pavement, that out jumps the sparklers. Well, ye see, your honour, them fellows, the priestesses, or whatever they be called, runs altogether of a heap, like so many jackdaws, and picks up the sparklers, before you could say Jack Robinson, and this here garbage crow, whips some'ut into his potatytrap;—but blow me if I don't have it out of him somehow or some —. Well, as you see, sir, we next, all hands of us, claps on, and tows the himmage, by the feet, down this ere hill; and, as we tows him along, the mob gets round us, and I thought we should be forced to have a fight for it; but I tells Domingo to say, that as how, at the first blow that was given, I'd whip a brace of balls

through this ere fat priestesis ; for I'm determined to have the diamonds out of him, dead or alive, anyhow ; so I marches him down before me, with my pistol cocked ;—and now, your honour, here you please to take the command, only leave Mr. Garbage to me."

Fitz having heard to an end his boatswain's harangue, thought he had better take his advice as to sending the priest on board ; but the image was so large and heavy, that no boat they had could carry it whole, and it would have been doing too great a violence to the feelings of the people to have cut it in pieces. In this dilemma, they rigged some cross pieces of boats' masts, &c., between the two pinnaces, and laid the image on the balcony, as the sailors called the intermediate space between the boats.

On seeing this immense spoil thus borne off, the people were so enraged that it was with difficulty Fitzjohn could embark his crew. The alcaide, however, the fat priest, and five other respectable citizens, being, at the same time, conveyed on board the *Chance*, Fitzjohn desired Domingo to tell them, that any attack on his crew would be a signal for the death of the above-named worthies ; while, on the other hand, if they were peaceable, and would send a boat off at sunset, Messrs. Alcaide and Co. should be released, which they accordingly were ; but without the recovery of Mr. Pipes' "sparklers."

The weather looking, at this time, rather threatening, the *Chance* stood out to sea ; and, on mustering the crew, they found two of the Spaniards had deserted. The gale increasing, Fitz was now obliged to think of some anchorage for the next day, as the sea was rapidly getting up, and the wind blowing right on shore. Before daylight, they therefore bore up, and in a few hours were safely at an anchor in the port of Callao.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TOWARDS the evening, the gale had progressed to a perfect hurricane ; and, while they were rejoicing at being so snugly anchored, they discovered there was another storm brewing, for which they were obliged to prepare.

Fitzjohn having been engaged in looking at the shore,

observed a number of troops and seafaring men collecting on the beach. After watching their motions narrowly for a short time, they soon had no doubts of their intentions, namely, to attempt the carrying off the *Chance* by boarding her.

As the deserters had, doubtless, told them the strength of Fitzjohn's crew, he now prepared for the worst, as follows:—

The swinging booms having been rigged out, a spare topmast and topsail-yard, well lashed endways together, were attached to the bowsprit by a strong hawser, which led through a thimble at the end of the boom, thereby serving to keep them from the vessel's side. These spars, of course, floated on each side, and reached from the swinging boom-end to nearly abreast of the taffrail.

The broadside guns having been well crammed with grape and canister, were depressed so as to fire about two feet above the floating masts and yards; in the water, and athwart the stern, a spare spar, called the handmast, was so lashed as to keep the floating spars asunder, lest the shock of the boats might drive them alongside. By this means, the ship lay defended on each side and the stern, by an outer line of spars, a protection which was only wanting on the bow. To remedy this defect, a heavy boarding-netting was hung to the spritsail yard, so as to touch the water; and three men were stationed with muskets in the fore-topmast stay-sail netting, where they not only commanded the bow-ports, but were able to prevent the cable from being cut, having, in addition to their musketoons, a basket of hand-grenades.

The bow-chasers having been taken from their original position forward, were run aft, and placed along on either side of the cabin-hatchway, with their muzzles rather depressed below the point-blank range, loaded with a very reduced charge of powder, and rammed full of old nails, broken files, and pieces of iron. At each of these guns was stationed a steady gunner's mate, who would *not* fire until he was ordered, but would fire *when* he was told.

The bow-ports having thus, as it were, lost their metal, were covered over with boarding-netting, and a party of small-arm men, with pikes, were stationed to defend them. The main boarding or broadside nettings, were hauled out

to the fore and main yard-arm, with a pig of ballast lashed to them, close to where they touched the tricing lines. In the fore and main-top were stationed the best fire-arm men, with particular and most positive orders not to fire in-board.

As it was Fitzjohn's determination not to attempt firing the great guns more than once, broad planks were prepared to lay along and upon them as soon as they had been discharged, so that the men might mount upon this platform, and use their muskets to greater advantage.

The upper, or flush-deck, being thus defended, it was necessary to prepare the 'tween decks, in case of the enemy getting below. For this purpose the main-deck gratings were placed athwart, and abreast of the coamings of the after-hatchway, being well secured to stand edge-wise, and prevent the enemy from getting aft, while the openings of the gratings allowed the privateer's crew to use their musketry or boarding-pikes through the interstices. In addition to this, all the hatches were battened down, excepting the fore-cabin hatchway on the flush-deck.

As the wind generally blows off the Spanish shore at night, the topsail and top-gallant yards were hoisted half-mast up, and their sails, as well as the courses, allowed to hang in their gaskets, as well as the jib to lie loose along its boom. Every preparation being now made, and the ship's company having finished their supper, the hands were called aft, and Fitzjohn addressed them in the following words:—

“My lads, which do you prefer?—plenty of prize-money, or the dungeons of the Inquisition? The choice depends upon yourselves. You know we have made rather free with the silver and golden images of our friends ashore, so that if we are taken our doom is fixed. Let this weigh well on your minds;—but more than that, remember we are Englishmen! Those colours flying over our heads must never be disgraced; for although we are privateers' men, we have English blood in our veins, and if we live it must only be to conquer.

“Now let us nail the colours to the peak, and do our best. We are no snivellers; but I trust, just the lads for whom the old song has been written, ‘We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again.’”

Three cheers were immediately given by the ship's com-

pany, and they were dismissed to sleep at their quarters. A swift-pulling four-oared galley was ordered to row guard around the Chance, at a distance of two cables' length, and to give intimation, by the burning of a blue-light, of the approach of the enemy.

At about two A.M. the appointed signal was made, and, in a few minutes, the sea between the Chance and the shore appeared covered with boats, rowing out steadily in two divisions.

Four large Spanish launches appeared destined to attack the broadsides, two on each; and a swarm of smaller boats made for each bow. As they rounded-to in their course to come up fore and aft, they fell, as it was expected, alongside the floating boom, the spars preventing the possibility of approaching the ship's sides.

"Silence, my boys, silence!" cried Fitzjohn;—"be cool as cucumbers—stand to your great guns, and prepare to give them both broadsides—ready—fire!—well done, my boys!—be cool! Now, hands by the tricing lines, let go the boarding-nettings."

The line of flame and death had scarcely flashed from the ports of the ship, pouring the most dreadful havoc into the boats that attacked her, when, with tremendous weight and swiftness, down came the boarding-nettings over the assailing party, whose crews were thus enveloped in a snare, from which it was almost impossible to escape.

The weight of the pigs of ballast, had, of course, sunk the boarding-netting considerably below the water, and the cries and dreadful yells of pain succeeding to the broadside were truly horrible. The foe now presented a fair mark, the planks were run along the guns, and the small-arms men poured in volley after volley on the enemy, who, grinning with rage and fury, and the intense anguish of their wounds, were struggling to escape, or to cut the netting with their knives and swords, or repeating the pitiful cry of mercy, as their nature inclined, in this extremity, to timidity, daring, or supplication.

Thus, then, matters continued with the attacked, who, conscious that they fought for their lives, loaded and fired, and peopled with the bloody corpses of their assailants the depths below. The Spaniards, on the other hand, notwithstanding the precautions taken, had, to the number of about

forty men, contrived to get over the bows, and, with their short spadilloes and long knives, were retaliating, to the utmost, on the crew of the *Chance*, the terrific punishment which their own party had received.

Fitzjohn, seeing this, made a desperate rally with his men, and by a rush forward cleared the decks, putting to death all who opposed him. Many of the Spaniards having got below, with an intention of taking those on the quarter-deck in the rear, were stopped by the precautions to which recourse had been had between decks. In an hour and three quarters the battle had ceased; but not before two Spanish launches and three smaller boats were left in possession of the *Chance*. The slaughter had been, as may well be imagined, most dreadful,—one hundred and seventeen Spaniards being killed and forty-seven wounded.

The Spaniards pulled away from the ship just before day broke, leaving behind them a large Spanish launch, with nineteen killed and eleven wounded, on the starboard side; and a smaller boat, with seven killed and eleven wounded, under the larboard bow. One boat, moreover, was left drifting about a short distance from the *Chance*; while on her decks, and below, were found fourteen killed and seven wounded; and amongst these, the two deserters, one killed, and the other still alive, though severely hurt. Of this good gentleman the most particular care was taken, knowing that great and useful information might be procured from him.

The *Chance* lost, in this severe encounter, seventeen killed and twenty-three wounded, besides the first and second mate, and three midshipmen, as they were termed on board the privateer. The greater part of the wounds were inflicted by a stab,—for these boarders were armed with a short, broad dirk, the blade of which was not more than eighteen inches long, but which they used in the left hand with great agility: their swords were very long, and basket-handled.

On the recovery of Pedro, as the deserter was named, he informed them that the fat priest Fitz had released was at the head of the Inquisition, and that he had made use of his calling, and consequent influence, to get together as many seafaring men as could be procured along that line of coast. In this crusade, it appears, he had been aided by

the monks, three of whom were attached to the boarders, to whom they had promised every absolution which the church could give, provided the Chance was taken.

In this case, the captain and ship's company were to have been handed over to the Inquisition for trial and punishment, in expiation of their sacrilege. Pedro also informed Gentleman Jack, that there were already five English subjects—three men and two women—in the cells of the Inquisition, which were situated under the cathedral which Pipes had so adroitly sacked; and, moreover, that in the same place was a large store of gold and silver in bars.

Fitzjohn, on hearing this, determined to keep out of sight of the land for some weeks; and as soon as the Chance was once more in her proper kelter, he began to prepare for an expedition he had planned, by previously dividing the prize-money on the capstan-head,—for the virgin silver being as ductile as the softest lead, was easily cut in pieces and shared out by weight: one half being previously retained for the owners of the vessel.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A FEW days after the partition of spoil recorded in the last chapter, a strange sail was espied from the mast-head. On nearing her, she hoisted Spanish colours; but as she appeared too large for the Chance to attack by day, and the privateer evidently sailed three feet for her two, Fitzjohn decided to hover about her to windward, until a favourable opportunity presented itself of dealing with her under the colour of the night.

The ardent minds of his prize-devouring crew set her down at once for a Spanish galleon, and they were calculating how they should dispose of their prize-money, where they should purchase their estates, and so on, with a thousand other chimeras, in the nursing of which sailors are not the only dreamers who enjoy by anticipation what they may never realise.

Towards the middle of the second night, light, steady breezes and drizzling rain, so seldom witnessed in these beautiful climates, afforded too favourable an opportunity to be lost. At one A.M. the Chance bore up under the

stranger's stern, and firing two or three broadsides into her it soon brought down some of the gingerbread work: the Chance then wore round, and repeated the dose, keeping out of the range of the enemy's broadside.

A few straggling muskets and an occasional swivel-shot formed the only sort of resistance made by the stranger. On her hoisting, therefore, two lights at her peak, Fitzjohn ceased firing, and, to his great surprise, was hailed in good, plain, and never-to-be-mistaken English.

"On board the ship ahoy?"—"Halloa!" was the answer.

"Who the devil are you?" says the first voice, again speaking. "Are ye Spaniards or pirates, or where do you hail from? What colours do you sail under?—death's-head and cross-bones? If ye are Englishmen, bear a hand aboard: we've got 'em, but can't keep 'em long."—"Send your boat aboard me," said Fitzjohn, "or I'll sink you."—"You be d—d! you'd better not," politely returned the first voice; "we are but nine to twenty-seven; and I'm blowed if they won't master us if you don't bear a hand! we'll drop a Frenchman astarn, and he'll tell ye all about it. Come, Mounseer, overboard you go!" continued the voice in a lower tone: the answer to which address was, "*Miséricorde! miséricorde!*"

A splash in the water, however, soon informed Fitz what had happened; so, lowering a boat from the Chance's stern the unfortunate Frenchman was picked up. Our hero now learnt that the stranger was one of our homeward-bound Bengal ships of the smallest size, called the Hoogly. The fate of this ship had been strange, indeed, and served most admirably to illustrate some of the fortunes of war. She had been first captured by a Spanish privateer, then retaken by the Violent, English man-of-war brig. The Violent, having put a prize-crew on board, despatched her to the Cape, on her way to which she was captured by the famous Surcouf, in the French frigate, La Forte, which, as my readers know, was ultimately taken by the gallant Captain Cooke, who lost his life in the moment of victory, while La Forte's bones now lay sunk at the entrance of the harbour of Jidda, in the Red Sea. But to resume the Hoogly:—it appears that her first conqueror, the Spanish privateer, had taken out of her the captain, his mate, twelve English seamen, one English lady, and two servant-

maids, making sail for the port of Callao, on the coast of South America, and ordering the Hoogly to follow her.

Then came the Violent, who, as I said before, had recaptured her, and had put on board twenty-six English seamen, one master's mate, and two middies, to navigate her to the Cape; when, however, Surcouf, in *La Forte*, made his unwelcome appearance, he had taken out all the English crew, excepting the mate and nine of his men, sending on board, in their place, twenty-seven Frenchmen, with orders to conduct the prize to Europe.

The Hoogly now, then, fell in with the *Chance*; the French prize-master, seeing she was a Spanish-built vessel, very prudently, though in vain, hoisted Spanish colours, knowing that the Spanish and French were allies, and intending to make her passage by Cape Horn and along the coast of Brazil, so as to keep out of the way of the British cruisers.

Upon questioning mounseer more closely, it appeared that a *Monsieur Sonnette*, the name, he said, of the English mate, had, with his nine men, risen on the Frenchmen as soon as the *Chance* began firing into her; the mate being satisfied, from the manœuvres of the *Chance*, that she must have English hearts on board. For this compliment Fitz, in his own heart, pronounced that the mate must be a good fellow, though the name of Sonnet was more fit for a poet's mate than a prize ship's. However, as soon as day broke, Fitzjohn, although the Hoogly had struck her Spanish colours, sent his boat on board, desiring that the same number of Frenchmen might be returned to the *Chance*, and the English boat's crew retained to assist their countrymen.

The order to this effect was signed by Fitzjohn, and within a few minutes after this a boat having arrived alongside, a gruff voice, half-choked with joy, hailed the privateer with, "I say, old messmate, don't you know me? I long to tip you my daddle."

"Ah!" exclaimed to Fitzjohn the Frenchman who was standing on the quarter-deck of the *Chance*, "*Voilà le diable! Monsieur Sonnette*, he d—d savage homme—he soon as not kill poor Frenchman without ever demande pardon."

"Know ye?" returned Fitzjohn, in answer to Mr. Sonnet's hail, "how the devil should I know you?"—"Why the devil shouldn't you? I say. Don't you see it's Jim Bell?" At the very moment that old Jim thundered this out, it rushed into Fitzjohn's stupid head that Sonnet was certainly French for Bell; and hence Jim's new christening at the hands of the Gaul. "Ah, Jim, my boy, is that really you? I'm right glad to see you; come on board as soon as you can," said Fitz.—"So I will," returned Jim, "as soon as I have settled some of these here crapeaus," flourishing his sword.

"Draw it mild, Jim," quoth Fitzjohn: "remember they are now our prisoners."—"Aye, aye! so I do; and so faith would you, if you'd a had on the cursed thumb-screws which Mounseer Lee Tiger, the prize-master, aboard here, has clapped on me lately, Spanish fashion! And I'm blow'd if I don't pay him off yet for it, that's more! Come, come," addressing Le Tigre, the French lieutenant, lately in command of the Hoogly, "up you must, and go in the boat, and see if I don't sarve you out when I gets ye on board the privateer, that's all!"

Lieutenant Le Tigre, at this gentle and comfortable summons, descended into the boat, and arrived on board the Chance. He was a tall, powerful, mulatto-coloured Frenchman, with a good mixture of Spanish blood, wearing a glazed cocked hat, and having a sarcastic, revengeful countenance.

After tendering his sword to Fitzjohn, which the latter kept until his old messmate, Jim Bell, should explain the story of the thumb-screws, Fitz took no further notice of him. Le Tigre, on the other hand, muttered to himself, that "if he had known she had been only a corsair he should have fought it out, and would not have surrendered *L'Espée de la République Française* to the captain of a corsair."

"Monsieur," said Fitzjohn, quickly, "if you had possessed an inclination to fight it out at all you would have done so under any circumstances. But I presume that you are, with myself, equally well aware that the shot of a 'corsair' are not a whit more soft or polite than those of a man-of-war. And I beg to tell you," pointing to the Hoogly's peak, "it is the birthright of an Englishman,

that his colours should ride above those of every other nation wherever there is water to float or breeze to fly them."

Le Tigre, seeing that he had an awkward hand to manage in our young friend, very wisely shrugged his shoulders in reply, and stood back.

Jim, having come on board in the next boat, Fitz shook his hand most heartily, saying, "that he and his nine men were a valuable acquisition to the Chance, as she was becoming too much encumbered with foreigners to be quite safe; since what with the Spanish prisoners left out of the wounded boarders, on the night of their grand attack, and the Frenchmen now sent on board, there was considerable reason to believe that a rising against their captors might be attempted."

It was now resolved to store the Chance with four months' provisions of all kinds, and to turn the Hoogly into a prison-ship, by building a place of confinement, amidships, in the main hold.

As soon as Fitz and Jim Bell found time for a little mutual recitation of the past, Jim confirmed all the story of capture and recapture, but asserted that Le Tigre had put to death an English passenger, in order to appropriate his property to himself; particularly a small box which Mr. Graves, the name of the deceased, had brought with him on board the Hoogly at Bengal. Jim further stated, that on accusing him of this crime publicly he had condemned Jim to the torture of the thumb-screw, which some of the Spaniards had left on board after she had been first captured.

To this charge, the known honesty of Jim gave very solemn and serious weight, to say nothing of its being supported by one of the English seamen, as well as strong circumstantial evidence elicited from the French crew.

Fitzjohn had, at the first impulse, decided to run to the Cape of Good Hope, and deliver his prisoner over to the civil power; but then he reflected that half his crew would be impressed, and that Jim and his men would be taken from him. This decided Fitzjohn to investigate the charge at sea; and so, if possible, supersede the necessity of having recourse to any other authority.

With this view, all papers that could be found on board the Hoogly were speedily transferred to the privateer. It soon appeared that Mr. Graves had embarked in the

Hoogly, after a residence of forty years in India, carrying with him, it was supposed, the title-deeds of property to a very great amount; which title-deeds were also said to be stowed in a box, about the size of a small writing-desk, which he kept constantly under his pillow.

For a long time, it was the wonder of all the passengers what this supposed desk could contain, and some one having joked the old gentleman on the subject, he pretended to let drop, as if by accident, the intimation, as I have already stated, that it contained the title-deeds to a large estate, which he had purchased in England, and on which he was now going to reside.

This then was the received belief on the subject, and during the various fortunes of the Hoogly, as the old boy always laid snug in bed to take care of his gear, it was supposed by the captors that he was what he appeared to be, some sick wretch, to prey on whom death had a better claim than any one beside. With this impression, the Spanish privateers had taken his wife and her maid out of the Hoogly, Graves appearing too feeble to be removed; and, moreover, preferring the guard of his wealth to the care of his wife.

But so short-sighted is human prudence, that the very steps he took to preserve his treasure were those which not only most endangered it, but finally lost him his life. The day after the French frigate, *La Forte*, had taken possession of the Hoogly, *Le Tigre* was put in as prize-master, and as soon as she parted company from the French man-of-war, *Le Tigre* had all the valuable effects of the passengers carefully examined; but notwithstanding Graves's ill-health he stuck most pertinaciously to his box, and on the same evening was found strangled in his bed, while his body was thrown overboard before daylight.

On inquiring for the supposed desk, *Le Tigre* swore by the *grand et bon Dieu*, that he had never seen it.

A general muster and search was immediately ordered by Fitzjohn, and the identical box was soon found, rolled up in a red flannel-shirt, in the centre of *Le Tigre's* chest, while the lock of it was readily opened by a key attached to a chain, which he wore round his neck.

Fitzjohn's natural curiosity induced him, the moment after the box was opened, to examine its contents. His

surprise and disappointment, therefore, may be conceived, when he found it filled with whitish gravel-stones; the largest of them about the size, though not the shape, of a nutmeg. Some one, thought he, must have pilfered this box and filled it with this rubbish. In his anger, he was about to fling the gravel overboard, but did not, as it might afford some proof of the theft in debate.

Le Tigre now accused his black servant of having secreted it. The black, hearing this charge, turned round to Fitzjohn, and inquired whether "All blackman freeman in English man-of-war ship?"—"O yes," replied Fitzjohn.

"Den me tell de truth. Massa Tigre tell me and Pierre le Coq, noder black nigger now in prison in big ship, to trangle Master Graves, and trow him into sea, and bring him leetle box under head. Me see Massa Tigre open him box, and he so taken up wid what he see him dere, one leetle letter drop out—I keep."

The black, after fumbling in his bosom for some time, produced a letter, wrapped up in paper, which was nearly worn to pieces by the friction of his body: the letter itself was, however, quite perfect, though soiled. It appeared to be the will of poor Graves, in these words:—

"On board the Bengal ship, Hoogly, I leave and bequeath unto my dearly beloved wife, Jane Graves, whom I married in Calcutta, all my property, real and personal, subject to the few legacies below named. And if necessary, I desire that this box of rough diamonds, valued at a lac and a half of rupees, or as much less as may serve, be given for her ransom from the hands of the Inquisition at Callao, where I hear she is to be placed by the captain of the Spanish privateer, which made prize of and cruelly separated us."

After this followed the legacies, and on the margin of the will was a rough calculation of his property, which appeared to be somewhat near four hundred thousand pounds.

"By Jove!" thought Fitzjohn, "this must never be allowed to go a-begging—clearly not—no, no,—clearly not. This good lady must be rescued; I have already the most decided conviction that the unhappy widow is not only the most injured, but the most amiable of her sex." Even when Gentleman Jack had only heard of her as a very beautiful wife, he felt a strange desire to be a little better

acquainted; but now, as a widow with four hundred thousand pounds, he *must* fly to her assistance. Having folded up the will, without making any comment, he looked at the diamonds, and grew perfectly faint as he remembered how nearly he had thrown overboard a lac and a half of rupees. Placing them carefully in the custody of Jim Bell, he now proceeded with the trial of Le Tigre. For this, it was imperatively necessary to have the evidence of Pierre le Coq.

The ships having been hove to, and the negro brought on board the Chance, his examination, like that of the rest, took place in public. As his testimony confirmed, in the most unquestionable manner, all that the other negro had before asserted, Fitz called on Le Tigre for his defence.

The Frenchman, notwithstanding all that had been brought forward, still held out that he was falsely accused, and threatened Fitzjohn with the vengeance of "*La grande Nation*."

To this, Fitzjohn replied, "that if he had nothing to rely on but asseveration without proof, and threats which never could be fulfilled, he would have done a wiser thing to have remained silent." Our hero then proceeded to sum up the case to his officers and crew; and having done this, he had the name of each called over from the ship's books, and their verdict of *guilty* or *not guilty* marked against it. The result of this proceeding was, not one single verdict of Le Tigre's innocence was found, out of the whole officers and crew belonging to the privateer. A unanimous opinion having been thus given, Fitzjohn declared that they all coincided with his own, and therefore nothing remained for him, but the painful duty of telling the French lieutenant to prepare for death at the yard-arm on the following morning, which he accordingly did. After this, Le Tigre was removed below, and put in irons.

On being led up for execution on the following morning, he confessed to the murder; and Fitzjohn having addressed to him a few words, suitable at that awful moment, his soul was committed to that mercy in the next world, which neither justice nor necessity could permit his fellow-creatures to extend to him in this. Le Tigre's body having hung from the yard-arm for an hour, it was lowered down, sewn up in a hammock, and buried from the gangway.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FITZJOHN now found it was incumbent on him to decide as to his future course. He therefore resolved to land his prisoners on ———, and proceed with both vessels to Callao, there to release the charming widow Graves. For such he had resolved that she must be, together with the other English prisoners, from the hands of the Inquisition.

Falling in, on the morning after the execution of Le Tigre, with a homeward-bound South-sea trader, who had on board forty convicts returning from transportation, he engaged twenty-seven of those most accustomed to the sea, so that between the two crews he mustered one hundred and twenty fighting men, besides officers; and having christened the Hoogly the Hazard, he confided the charge of her to "Jim Bell," and painted her with two tier of ports.

"Who'd ever thought," said Jim, "when I first seed you at the Tower that you would have made me a skipper,—a skipper of a frigate too? Don't you recollect how I was taken aback when them ere Lords of the Hadmiralty dined at your mother's table? For my part, I don't like them sort o' nobbs; give me a black jack of swipes and plenty of salt grub, where I feel myself easy. To my mind, a man can't enjoy, as it were, the commonest sort of luxury, in them ere fine Harlington Street rooms. One can't either chaw bacca, or spit on those fine carpets. I likes to be where a rub of the foot takes it all up."

Fitzjohn smiled at Jim's idea of luxury, and having given his old messmate sailing instructions, in case of parting company, as well as a code of private signals, the Chance and the Hazard made sail for the port of Callao. On the seventeenth morning, the high lands of the Andes were discovered, and having, during the day, kept well out of sight of land, lest their strength should be ascertained from the shore, Fitz ordered all sail to be made at dusk, so that, when daylight broke, both ships pushed into the port, and the Hazard, according to order, hoisted a commodore's broad pennant.

Our hero, having lined all the seamen's jackets with red baize, no sooner was that side turned outermost, than they appeared like so many soldiers, and having placed along

the gangway, and on the poop, a number of handspikes, mounted with military caps, the whole manœuvre gave a very martial appearance to the ships in the eyes of the inhabitants.

A boat was now immediately lowered down from the Hazard, and a flag of truce despatched to the governor with the following letter, while the Chance was ordered to keep under weigh, standing off and on, and making signals as if to an approaching fleet.

“ TO THE GOVERNOR OF CALLAO.

“ SIR,—Information has been received by the Governor General of His Britannic Majesty’s possessions in the East Indies, that you have consigned to the dungeons of the Inquisition three English females, who were returning to Europe as passengers in the Bengal merchant ship Hoogly, and also some English seamen, who were assisting to navigate that vessel to her destination.

“ I now, therefore, have to call upon you to deliver up to the British flag within one hour from this time, the prisoners above described, or to send off the superiors of the Inquisition, as well as some of the principal merchants of the town, for the fulfilment of this my demand, at the earliest opportunity. For a peaceable compliance with this just requisition, I trust to that high sense of honour so paramount in the bosom of a true Spaniard, and which I am sure will need no other prompting to avoid the needless effusion of blood, and the destruction of your city.

“ I have the honour to remain, Sir,

“ As you decide,

“ Your friend or enemy,

“ NELSON.”

Fitzjohn, as he placed to this document so redoubtable a signature, could not but smile at the joke, as would the immortal hero himself have done, could he have known the fact. Fitzjohn, however, being well aware what terror it would strike into the enemy, determined not to throw away any chance of saving the lives of his men. He therefore told the officer who bore the letter to adhere to the assertion.

On the arrival on shore of the flag of truce, the bearer was blindfolded and led into the presence of the governor,

who was surrounded with all his principal staff. Amongst others present was the identical fat priest, who had been in such a quandary about the silver images, and who was at the head of the Inquisition.

The governor, having read the letter; inquired whether the commander of the expedition was the "*grand amiral*" Nelson himself, "who loosy one eye and loosy one arm?" meaning, that had lost an eye and an arm.

Upon being answered in the affirmative, his excellency seemed dumbfounded. Fitzjohn, by way of keeping up the farce, had taken the precaution of giving the officer a false return of the number of troops supposed to be in the offing: making them amount to six thousand men, together with a supposed copy of the orders of the general commanding them. In these were given directions, amongst other things, to use the bayonet freely, to set fire to the cathedral, and bring all the Inquisitionists on board, dead or alive.

These pleasing instructions and returns, he was, as if accidentally, to let fall in the council room. During the debate, the officer was, as he expected, ordered out of the council-chamber, and having most adroitly dropped his papyri, they were greedily examined, and so horrified the council, that they decided on sending on board the fat priest, the alcaide, and six merchants as hostages, promising that the *detenues* and the prisoners should be delivered up, as soon as they could be brought down from a convent, situated two days' journey up the country, where it was said the ladies had been placed, after having renounced their religion and become Catholics.

As soon as the hostages were safely received on board, Fitzjohn stood out to sea with both ships, as if to join the rest of the fleet; previously sending word to the governor that he should return either with the whole squadron, or perhaps send a single vessel to receive the party claimed on the fourth morning, when, if a hair of their head should be hurt, the hostages would be hung at the yard-arm.

As soon as the ships were fairly out at sea, Fitzjohn had the hostages brought up from below, and began to question the fat padre. The astonishment of the latter, at finding in the *chef d'escadre* Fitzjohn, instead of the "*grand amiral*" Nelson, can be easier imagined than narrated. The

padre described Mrs. Graves in such glowing colours, that her portrait was recognised as being, without doubt, that of the four hundred thousand pound widow, so that Fitzjohn's anxiety on that lady's behalf increased with every hour. The maid-servant there was no difficulty in tracing also, but the third female, whom the padre described as drinking *aqua forte*, using her fists freely, and on all occasions smoking, and sometimes chewing tobacco, could not be a friend or acquaintance he hoped, of the amiable, respectable, and wealthy Widow Graves.

The long looked-for fourth morning at last arrived, and Fitzjohn stood in with the Chance alone, leaving the Hazard about three leagues off the land, making signals as before, to a distant squadron—distant enough in all conscience! As our hero neared the shore, a large Spanish xebec, with a flag of truce flying, came running out of the harbour, with the land wind, and her shoulder of mutton sail set, so that it was not until the xebec was close alongside that Fitzjohn discovered three females and six English seamen in the boat.

On seeing the women, the padre seemed very fidgetty, and stood at the gangway ready to jump into the xebec, but Fitzjohn gave orders that none of the hostages should leave the Chance until the released prisoners had been questioned. In the very act of giving these directions, his attention was drawn to a hoarse, unfeminine voice, hailing the Chance.

"On board the ship, ahoy! Have you got that old thief, my husband, Tom Pipes, aboard?"

"Yes, you horsebud, here I be," replied Pipes, looking over the forecastle, as grim as death on a rustic tombstone; "what the devil brought you here? Why I thought as how you'd been cruising at the back of the Point."

"Aye, you old blow-hard, so I might have been—ay, and died, and rotted, before you'd take a shot out of your locker to drop astarn for Poll."

"What," thought Fitzjohn, "is it possible that here can be my old messmate and adorer Poll Pipes?" but it was indeed no less than Mrs. Pipes, who, to prevent being starved in what she called her desertion, had come out in a merchant ship to search for Tom Pipes, who, it seems, had given her the slip when he first enrolled himself on board

the Chance. On reaching India, and hearing nothing of her lord, she had been captured on her return home in the Hoogly.

The moment she saw Fitzjohn upon the quarter-deck, she rushed up to him, flung her great arms round his neck, and there she hung, reminding him that she had been his friend when he first became a royal reefer. Leaving Fitzjohn for a moment, she turned her eyes towards the padre, whom she no sooner recognised, than she addressed in a very different style. "O you blessed fat varmint," said she, "I've got ye now in blue water, have I? and under English colours too, eh? Blow me if I don't give you a right proper wollopping for attempting to corrupt my morals with your hinfamous religion—your hinkisition, and all that ere!—I will, you lump of blubber. But I'll sarve you out, I say, for stopping my grog and putting me on bread and water. So I say here's at ye!" and with that, the fair boatswainiana attacked the padre's rubicund face with her nails, until the blood streamed down.

"I'll draw off some of your claret," continued the lady; "here, Tom Pipes, where's your rattan, he wants a good rubbing down; I say, Captain Fitzjohn, wipe him down with six dozen; Tom will lay it into him, he werry richly desarnes it, for if I hadn't broke loose from them ere 'quisitionists, blow me if I know what might have been the consequence to poor Pipes. I knew as how the day of 'talia-tion would come—every one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost."

As Poll gave utterance to this classic quotation, she hit the friar such a tremendous straightforward blow with her clenched fists, as fairly knocked him over the Chance's gangway into the sea.

"D—n you for an old hellicat," cried Pipes, rushing aft when he beheld this catastrophe fall out. "Hang me, but you've drowned that poor devil, as sure as he's a parson."

"Drowned," quoth Poll, "you be drowned yourself. Did ever you know a dead whale to sink?"

But Pipes would not trust to this fact in natural history, which he conceived might by no means extend to friars; he therefore seized a boat-hook, jumped over the side, and when the padre rose to the surface, hooked him by his

girdle, after which he was got on board the xebec, and consigned to the care of his countrymen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHILE on the quarter-deck of the *Chance* were passing those scenes which we have described in the last chapter, Fitzjohn had been wholly occupied in endeavouring to restore to life Mrs. Graves, who had no sooner reached the gangway of the privateer than she fainted. This our hero naturally set down to her vivid feelings of joy at once more finding herself under the protection of her own countrymen. With a degree of interest for which Fitz could himself scarcely account, and which I know not whether most to attribute to the four hundred thousand, or some other feeling, our hero raised her very tenderly in his arms, while Mrs. Pipes flew off at the padre, and bore her to his cabin.

Her maid-servant, seeing the condition of her lady, quickly followed, and Fitz having laid his pleasing burden on the sofa, and ran to get some water, during his absence the servant removed from the head of Mrs. Graves the two thick veils that had enveloped it. The fresh air playing on her face alone restored suspended animation; and when Fitz came running into the cabin with the water, he saw, sitting up before him on the sofa, not the strange rich widow, but his own lost love, Jane Wilson! With that ecstasy of delight so characteristic of a sailor's disposition, he dashed to the deck the water-glass he was carrying, sprang to her side, and in another moment, had clasped her in his arms. This, as a natural consequence, brought on faint the second. The servant was lost in utter bewilderment, for not being, as damsels of her condition far too frequently are, in her lady's confidence, she could only wonder who the gallant privateer's-man could be, wring her hands, wish for help, and render none. When, however, in a few seconds, her lady's eyes opened once more, she thought fit to take herself off, which was indeed the greatest kindness she could have rendered to the lovers.

The scene that now passed between Jane and Fitzjohn can easily be imagined by such of my readers as have had any experience in these tender matters. Those who have

not must rest contented with the assurance, *ex cathedra*, that the warmest efforts of their imagination can never picture forth one half the delight and misery yet in store for them. With this most comforting and truly oracular sentence, I leave them therefore to get in love the best way they can, and eke in the same way to get out of it, which, to say truth, I don't find to be quite so easy.

To return. At the earliest moment, Fitzjohn "*tore himself away*," and returned on deck, bundled all the hostages into the xebec, and with the Hazard "under his command," stood, like a gallant commodore, right out to sea.

O what a bright passage in Fitzjohn's life was the week that followed! Every day seemed to bring new life and beauty to the fair cheek of his beloved. How delicious it was, during the soft moonlights of that luxurious climate, to gaze with her on the silvered water, which each one trusted, in the recesses of the heart, to prove not more smooth and bright than their own future destinies! Strange and all-subduing passion!—which can so gild existence, that every hour in the twenty-four receives from its resplendence some portion of that loveliness which is the essence of itself! The sun rose, and they worshipped together the young effulgence of its glory. It was noon, and languidly reclining in the shade, their hands were locked in each other's. The witchery of twilight brought with it, if possible, an increase of their emotions, and even the stillness of the night-watch was to them more eloquent than words.

The danger resulting from the continuance of such a position soon made itself apparent to her whom it most concerned; and she spoke of the necessity of returning to England. This reminded Fitzjohn that Mrs. Graves must soon assume that mourning which was outwardly to denote the loss she had sustained. Again and again, during the brief week for which he had resigned to her his cabin, did he con over the exact words in which to ask her hand as soon as a proper interval should have expired. But though she might not have loved, he knew she had deeply respected her late husband, and he would not run the risk of making a proposal which might be held indelicate by one who, to a certain degree, was in his power—and, as far as gratitude might go, greatly in his debt.

On these grounds, Gentleman Jack now determined to

place Mrs. Graves under the care of Jim Bell, in the Hazard, with orders to lose no time in making the Cape of Good Hope, where he might get a convoy to England. As soon as Jane was restored to health, he returned her the box of diamonds, which Graves had appropriated for her ransom.

She was, as may well be supposed, much affected at the kindness displayed in poor Graves's last will, and Fitz, on his part, took every care that she should not even suspect the horrible end by which he died. For this purpose, he merely asserted the cause to have been violent congestion of the lungs. When the hour arrived for putting herself and maid-servant on board the Hazard, she endeavoured, as well as her tears would permit her, to assure Fitzjohn of her deep gratitude, and the lasting remembrance she would ever faithfully retain of him, promising to write, without fail, on the moment of her arrival in England. Poor Fitz himself could only speak in syllables, and nothing kept his eyelids dry but the remembrance that he had to appear before his men. Taking a long last kiss, therefore, of his first love, and taking her in his arms, for she was too much agitated to walk, he carried her on deck, and thence down into the boat, which bore her on board the Hazard. Fitzjohn having given Jim Bell a hearty shake of the hand, watched with an aching heart the passage of the Hazard's boat. A chair was lowered over the side for the fair passenger, the boat hoisted up, and all sail crowded for the Cape. It was now then, indeed, that Fitzjohn felt how much he had lost. Gradually the sails of the Chance's consort grew less and less in the horizon, and soon altogether disappeared. Fitzjohn now turned for relief to those subjects which more immediately required his attention on board his own ship, and which, during the last week, had been so much neglected.

In this object, he was for the moment not a little assisted by Mrs. Pipes making up to him and voluntarily delivering, with her own peculiar "heloquence," a full, true, and particular account, &c., of all she had gone through. From this it appeared that she had somehow or other, probably from some of the seamen's letters, managed to get an inkling of the Chance's great success in the prize-money department; and doubtful whether her lord would think of

her in her absence, had determined to, what she called, "work her passage out to the *Hinges*." In this laudable course she was greatly assisted, she told Fitzjohn, by "the boatswain of an Indyman having offered me bub and grub in his cabin, so I was determined to follow Tom, if 'twas only to prove what sort of a thing female haffection is."

CHAPTER XL.

ON the arrival at Calcutta of the Indiaman on board which Mrs. Pipes had embarked, she learnt that the usual port of rendezvous for the Chance was the Cape of Good Hope. This induced her, with as little delay as possible, to procure a passage in the Hoogly, where, as my readers know, destiny had also placed poor Mrs. Graves. The Hoogly being taken by the Spanish privateer, all the women were taken out of her, and from this point the history of my Lady Pipes need not be repeated.

"Well, Pipes," said Poll, addressing her husband, who stood on the gangway; "that ere fat corporation warmint of a friar's got away, arter all. Ah! you knows what it is to have a wartuous wife, but you don't walley me as you hort for to do! I, who have gone through such dangers to come back to you, you old sinner; and now never to be offered a drop of comfort. I say, Master Fitzjohn," turning round to our hero, "don't you recollect as how, when you come on board the *Himpetus*, and you gave me a ham and two tongues, you didn't grudge me a drop of comfort to wash the salt out of my mouth? You give me your whole four days' allowance of likor."

"Don't you call our captain 'master,' now," said Tom, interrupting his chaste spouse; "he's captain of this ere privateer, and we are bound to respect him as much as if he had a pair of swabs on his shoulders."

"Don't you go for to make a greater fool of yourself than you be already, Pipes," returned the lady; "captain or master, Fitzjohn knows what stuff Poll Pipes is made of before to-day; and I knows that where there's none of that ere bunting flying at the mast-head," meaning the pennant, which designates a king's ship, "there's no marshal law—

no cat-o'-nine-tails! This here ship be only a privateer, and I'll have my swing—I knows!"

"Well, that's nort to the parpus," said Tom: "you came on deck to ax his honour for a glass of grog, and to tell him all about the hinqquisition, and them ere fat friars that wanted——"

"Well, never you mind what they wanted—that's no business of your'n—so just hold fast your grog-trap!"

"Well, well, Poll," said Fitzjohn, "you shall come down in my cabin and have a good stiff glass of grog, north-west, if you like it."

"Thank your honour," replied Poll, "you was always a 'bliging, good kind of young fellar—didn't I always say so, Tom?"

"Why, to tell the truth, and shame the devil, as they say, you always did," said Tom.

"Two strange sail on the weather-beam!" called out the man from the mast-head.

"Take my best glass," said Fitzjohn to Pipes, "and see what you can make of them."

After the boatswain had been at the mast-head some time, Fitzjohn asked him what they looked like.

"Why, your honour, I thinks they're no go, they are rum uns," said Pipes, shaking his head, and coming down the rigging very carefully. As soon as he was on the deck, "I thinks, your honour," said he, "we shall have enough of it. Blow me, sir, if I don't think one on em arn't a French frigate, and t'other is an Hindyman, her prize, or a line-of-battle ship."

On hearing this, Fitz ordered the Chance to be cleared for action, and all the prisoners put below; the silver and golden images were stowed away in the after-hold, as well as all the other valuable *materiel* of the Chance's captures on the coast of South America. The vessel was then put right before the wind, this being one of her best points of sailing; and as it wanted but four hours of sunset, and the leading pursuer was then hull down, Fitzjohn hoped to escape from the headmost ship, which was evidently a frigate of the first class.

The evening was unfortunately very clear, and the wind light, so that Fitzjohn could not get more than four knots out of the Chance, while he had equal fears from the

stranger, whether she proved friend or foe. Should she turn out to be an English frigate, our hero knew that all his best men would be pressed into her; and if a Frenchman, why the heavy weight of calibre, and the chance of losing his masts, left him little hopes of success.

Before the sun set, the frigate had gained considerably on him, and by midnight a shot from the enemy's fore-castle gun passed through the main-top sail of the *Chance*. Fitzjohn now lowered one of his quarter-boats, and filling her with prisoners, gave them a lantern ready lighted, and only one pair of oars, but left them without rudder, sail or other article in the boat. He then told the prisoners that he intended to drop them astern, and when they came near the bows of the French frigate, they had better show the light, and roar out most lustily together. The pair of oars would be sufficient to keep the boat clear of the frigate; and he, for his part, was obliged to use them thus unceremoniously, as he hoped, by occasioning this delay, to get far ahead.

As soon as all the details of this good scheme were arranged, the boat's-painter was cast off, and she soon got under the enemy's bows. The *ruse* had the desired effect. No sooner were the light and the boat observed from the frigate, as well as the yelling heard from those who began to roar out so lustily, than the frigate was brought to the wind, to pick up the boat. The latter having no boat-hook, could not of course catch hold of the ship's side, nor was a rope thrown to them till too late; the pair of oars proved insufficient to keep way with the ship, and so, to prevent further difficulties, the frigate was obliged to lower down her own boat, and bring them alongside. This was exactly what Fitzjohn wanted, and occasioned sufficient loss of time, to gain for the *Chance* at least two miles ahead. Just before daylight the same manœuvre was again put in practice, and with the same success, the captain being too humane to allow the boat to pass without slackening sail to take on board the crew, which must otherwise have perished, and which were no doubt very acceptable to him.

The breeze now freshening with the break of day, soon revealed the superiority given by the immense and disproportioned sails of the *Chance*, which so rapidly distanced the frigate, that at night-fall of the second day she was again hull down astern.

"Now, then," thought Fitz, "since I have the legs of you, I may as well secure my escape at once;" and accordingly at ten P.M., he hoisted out from the booms his launch, the largest and only remaining boat, with the exception of the jolly, which hung over the stern. The launch being got alongside, two masts of equal height were stepped in her—the one aft and the other forward. At the mast-heads of these, lanterns were hoisted to appear about the height of the *Chance's* taffrail; and as soon as the boat was placed, broadside on, to appear as if it was the ship herself, the privateer was hauled on the starboard tack, and Fitzjohn keeping the wind abeam, in a direct course from the lantern, ran on for about fifteen miles. He then furled sail, as if at anchor, and at daylight, the enemy's frigate was at least as many miles broad on the *Chance's* lee-quarter. The other sail, however, which had been her consort, or prize, whichever it was, appeared right astern of the privateer, and was easily made out to be a deep-laden and large Indiaman. As soon as the frigate was fairly out of sight, Fitzjohn edged down to what Poll Pipes termed "that ere Hingy chap." Owing to the inferior rate of this vessel's sailing, he was but a comparatively short time in closing with her, which he did in the early part of the afternoon. After a short fight, in which two of the *Chance's* men were killed and five wounded, the enemy hauled down his colours. Fitzjohn now sent Pipes to take possession, and on the latter hailing the *Chance*, Fitz found, to his great satisfaction, that his new prize was an armed merchant vessel from Old Spain, bound to the Spanish American coast. On further examination, she proved to be chiefly laden with quicksilver to work the mines; having on board numerous passengers, consisting of a lieutenant-governor and his family, seventeen officers of the army, to reinforce those of the regiments that had died off in the colony, four Spanish ladies, nine fat padres, and one lean ditto.

The officers and their prisoners were too numerous to be pleasant in so small a vessel as the *Chance*, and the cargo of the *Donna Maria*, the name of the prize, was too valuable to be wantonly sunk. Under these circumstances Fitzjohn put the vessel into the charge of Pipes, as prizemaster, he being necessarily accompanied by his wife Poll.

On our hero's going aboard, some hours afterwards, to see what further arrangements were necessary, he found that Mrs. Pipes had made tolerably free with a cask of *eau de vie*, which the Spanish captain had opened between decks to encourage his men to fight. As Poll had now arrived at that introductory part of drunkenness which is generally denominated on board ship by the unexplainable epithet of "mops and brooms," she was just in possession of her own movements, and wore that stupid, maudlin expression of countenance, so expressive of the "happy state." Fitz found her very busily rambling over the decks, and brandishing a half-rusty Spanish dagger in her left hand, having suspended over her right shoulder a midshipman's clothes-bag, which appeared half-filled with plunder.

"By the piper that danced before Moses!" exclaimed Poll, flourishing the dagger in the face of a jolly fat friar, "I say you must hand out!—So come, bear a fist! Hand out, I say, or I'll soon send you to feed the sharks."—"Non entendes," replied the friar.

"Not in *ten* days, d'ye say; then I can only tell ye, you'll be in Davy's locker in ten minutes! What have you got here?—Under that ere broad belly-band, I mean;" laying hold of the reverend friar by the broad sash that encircled the lower part of his body.

"Poco, poco," quoth the friar.—"Ay, ay," says Poll, "I'll poke you!—I'll give you a few inches of cold steel, I say, if you don't unrig;—so doff that shovel-hat! Calves' head is too good a dish to remain covered!"

The poor and harmless friar's bald head here received a thump on the pericranium, which convinced him that there was something in a lady's possession much heavier than her fan. His pericranium being at once exposed to view, Poll cried, "Ah, well! there's nort there. But what have ye here? Is this all tripes?" pulling at the friar's waistband until there fell out from his robes about two dozen of small gold crosses, made with the greatest skill, and evidently intended for devotees of the higher ranks.

"I say, Tom Pipes!" roared our Poll, rocking to and fro in her glee, "here's a happy delivery I have brought the friar to! Two dozen little thing-um-bobs at a time."

With this, Poll began to gather up these precious spoils, and put them into the clothes-bag, while the friar was only

too glad of the opportunity to get rid of what he no doubt considered a most incarnate she-fiend. Having finished with this reverend father, Poll proceeded in her course between decks, where the prisoners were chiefly collected; and here she came to the body of a Spanish colonel, who had been dreadfully wounded in defending the Donna Maria, and whom, being dead, the surgeon had ordered to be laid on one side till the time for his burial with the others.

The rich uniform of the colonel, and his large epaulets, at once attracted the longing eyes of Poll. "My jingo!" cried she, "what a pair of swabs this ere chap has got! I'll bone 'em, I know, before our skipper sees 'em, or the devil a bit will ever I get on 'em again!"

Approaching the body, and bending her ear towards the mouth to ascertain if the gallant fellow still breathed, "I wonder," said she, "whether you be really dead, or only shamming?"

After looking at him for a moment, with an eye of suspicion, she said, "No, no: I think you be hard a-ground, and no fear of heaving off again; so, whether or no, 'twill be only Christian charity to put a poor body like you out o' your pain. Don't start now," muttering to herself as tipsy people do: "I'll be merry gentle, colonel; only don't start." With this she raised her dagger, and insinuating it into the chest of the corpse, the action produced a slight fluctuating noise from the confined air. "Come, come, now, Mr. Don Shambago, don't you say a word—I knows you're only joking; you must have been dead long ago, you know—otherwise I'm not the gal to hurt a worm; so don't you think to cheat Poll Pipes. No, no, you must get up d—d early to get to windward of Poll. So now, then, as you must be pretty aisy after that, let's proceed to business."

Accordingly, Poll set to and stripped the colonel of all his finery, taking the rings off his fingers, and his earrings from his ears. This duty discharged—she proceeded along the deck, traverse sailing, as she called it—as her eye was attracted by the rich appearance of this piece of booty or the other. Presently she saw one of the poorest class of mendicant friars of the Cordilleros, who had been praying by the side of an officer just dead. The friar was clothed

in sackcloth, his tunic kept together by a piece of common rope, and he was looking miserably meagre and dejected at that which even he considered the misfortune of being captured.

Poll, however, without much ceremony, catching him by the collar, exclaimed, brandishing her rusty weapon, "I suppose it's no sort o' use overhauling such a bag of bones as you are, is it? But, come, let's see what you've got: come, cast off that ere pudding band from your waistes, and I'll chuck it overboard. It puts me so much in mind of Tom Pipes's colt, that he used to welt me with. Come, come, bear a hand;" and with this she gave the rope such a pull that the knot slipped, and off it came, exposing the friar's meagre person to full view.

"Vy," says Poll, "you must a' robbed a churchyard of that ere skeleton; but, nevertheless, I'll overhaul ye. I'll lay a wager, though you do seem to have no stowage, there's someut aboard o' ye worth having. Come, make haste, for if ye don't I shall be precious apt to hit, and if I do I knows you'll remember it, so I tell ye. Such a scarecrow as you I'd soon double up, and put by like an old blanket; but, come, none of your gum, show me what you've got, I've no doubt you've your share."

The friar, however, not seeming to think Poll very intelligible, she seized hold of the loose part of his trowsers, and giving them a shake, which nearly tore them from clew to earring, out dropped a small bag, containing five gold chains, which served as suspenders to the crosses of which she had already relieved the fat friar, "Ah!" quoth Poll, sacking the prize; "there's a pair of you, as the devil said to his horns; though for all that, you're no great match—'cept it be in roguery. If there is ere a thing I hate, 'tis dishonesty, you thief of the world. There," flinging him the empty bag that had lately contained his riches, "wrap your carcass up, you ragged rascal. Har'n't you got no sense of dacency! So, there, now you may go your own way—Poll always does her duty."

With this peroration she now tied up her bag, into which she carefully put the dagger; and as she staggered off kept muttering to herself, "Well, Poll, I thinks as how you've made a good haul of this day's work. These ere beggars what will be thrown overboard at sunset" (alluding to the

burial of the dead at that hour) "won't take much to Davy Jones with 'em."

This soliloquy brought her to the quarter-deck ladder, where Fitzjohn was walking with his mates. As soon as Poll saw Fitzjohn she dowsed the bag from her shoulder, and tried to conceal it behind her; but in this she did not, to her entire satisfaction, succeed. "What have you got there, Mrs. Pipes?" said Fitzjohn.

"Why, please ye, Master Fitzjohn, said Poll, "I've been picking up some little usefuls between decks, for Pipes and myself; I assure your honour they are not of any wally, or I wouldn't have touched them."—"Well, well, Mrs. Pipes, valuable or not, they must go into the general stock, and be divided with the rest of our captures on the capstan-head: that's the rule of the owners of the privateer: for we don't choose to let our money go into the hands of those land-sharks, the navy agents."

"Please your honour, I've only been taking *a pair of swabs* for your honour, which Pipes hoften says you ought to have had long ago."—"I dare say, Mrs. Pipes, I shall get my swabs one of these days; but I must not do injustice to any of my officers or crew."

"Well," says Poll, "what must be, must be, has the song says; but it's too hard to have to shell out, after all the trouble I've had in gleaning! Please your honour, to let me have one of them ere little crosses to hang round my neck, for I've serious hideas of becoming Catholic, Mr. Fitzjohn."—"I never interfere with the religious feelings of any one," quoth Fitz: "and if such is the state of your moral convictions, perhaps Pipes will choose what you want when the day of partition comes. Meanwhile, give up that bag to the first mate."

This officer accordingly advanced and took it, but in the act of doing so, received from the fair lady "a dig" in the side, which he did not forget in a hurry, while Poll, having vented her spleen, went grumbling down below, to see if it was yet too late to repair her vexatious loss.

As the prisoners, from their numbers, began seriously to inconvenience the privateer, Fitzjohn decided upon standing in towards the coast of South America, and endeavouring to get a ransom for each individual, and then return to Liverpool with the *Chance* and her prize, since by that

time would have expired the two years for which she was to cruise.

For the accomplishment of this, however, he did not consider it quite safe to return to Callao. The force of the privateer and her consort must, he knew, have been too well described by the freed hostages, to enable him to come "Nelson" over them again.

Both ships were therefore put well to rights, fresh painted, and everything done that could be devised to give them a warlike appearance. Tom Pipes having been then installed by the Lord High Admiral, Fitzjohn, as captain of the Donna Maria, he received orders always to bear the commodore's broad pennant in sight of an enemy.

The crews and the prisoners were next proportionably divided. Two of the Spanish young ladies, sisters, and their confessor, were left in the Donna Maria, with Mrs. Pipes as *governante*, in right of being the captain's wife.

The course of Fitzjohn's small squadron was now shaped for Valparaiso, where the Chance had not been seen. The great difficulty they had to overcome was that of communicating with the shore, without the real force of the two ships being known. But here fortune favoured them. Standing in for the land, they observed a strange brig becalmed under it; and on sending two boats to examine her, she proved to be the far-famed "Yankee Doodle," an American privateer, of sixteen guns, and one hundred and sixty men, commanded by a well-known, able, and experienced officer, Captain Gouge'em, a nephew, it was supposed, of that celebrated and double-jointed officer, Commodore Rogers.

Now Captain Gouge'em had seen some service. It was he who had been wrecked upon that newly discovered fish, the "sea-sarpeut," where, after living upon stakes cut from the tail of the animal for eventeen days, they escaped by making a raft of some of its detached scales, taking one of his old cast-off eyelashes for a mast; and happening luckily, at the very moment of their readiness to start, to catch "by great good accident," as the captain phrased it, a flying-fish, were thus safely and most speedily towed to the New World.

Fitzjohn having picked up so inestimable a *compagnon de voyage*, lost no time in proposing to Captain Gouge'em to

assist him in his projected expedition against Valparaiso, reminding him that the only part he was asked to take was that of "a mediator," or diplomatic go-between, for his faithful service in which department Fitz offered him one-third of whatever proceeds might accrue.

"I've a nation great mind, indeed," replied Captain Gouge'em, "to accept your kind offer, which shows to great advantage the national genius of you Britishers. I don't see why I and my crew shouldn't make an honest penny while we've got the opportunity; and though it is very true that we arn't at war just now, yet there's no saying how soon we may be; and we both know that the first blow is half the battle; so, captain, I'll take your offer."

Upon the matter being thus finally agreed, Captain Gouge'em wrote a letter to the governor of the city, stating in what capacity he presented himself, and how useless any resistance would be; and, finally, recommending the governor, as his friend and ally, to levy a contribution, and send it off as soon as possible, as well as the ransom demanded for the prisoners, stating, at the same time, their number and rank. With this letter, Captain Gouge'em was kind enough to go on shore himself—that he might add personal persuasion to written advice; and, as the officer who had been messmate with the "sea serpent" was not likely to "be done" in a hurry, he managed his ambassadorial powers so well, that in two days the money was not only paid, but divided amongst the vessels, and they parted company, with, to use Captain Gouge'em's words, "every reason to be highly satisfied with each other." The *Chance* and her prize made straight for Liverpool, and the Yankee *Doodle* proceeded on her destined service.*

During the passage home, the booty was divided on the capstan-head, one-half being laid aside for the owners, a portion for Greenwich Hospital, and the remainder distributed amongst the officers and ship's company, while Fitz-

* Our American brethren are not, I believe, quite so well seasoned in literary quizzing as ourselves, and do not perhaps so thoroughly understand it. As nothing can be farther from my wish than to join in the miserable insults which, from certain quarters, are so often heaped upon a brave and sensible nation of our own descendants, it may be as well to remark to my Transatlantic readers—if I have any—that the story of Captain Gouge'em is, of course, all a fudge.

john, on calculating that evening how much he had made and squandered in the two years' cruise, found the amount to fall very little short of twenty-two thousand pounds—a great part of which was of course still in hand.

Mrs. Pipes, on the division, had her wish for the gold cross realised; but whether on this, her “moral convictions” underwent any particular change, is, perhaps, a point which the reader has yet to ascertain.

CHAPTER XLI.

As Fitzjohn had taken care long since to advise the owners of the *Chance* respecting his return to Liverpool, he found one of them had already been waiting during the last fortnight his arrival at that port.

His accounts were now soon squared, as well as his first duty discharged, of seeing his men duly paid their wages. The proprietors of the privateer expressed themselves so highly pleased with his conduct, that they offered him any terms to remain in command for a second period of two years. But our hero had now had his freak out, and was anxious to return to the service and secure his promotion.

Having called his men together just before paying them off, he thus addressed them:—

“MY MEN,—The time has now arrived when we must part. I have therefore summoned you to the capstan that I may say good-bye to you, and in so doing, say also how well pleased I have always been with your ready obedience to orders, and general good conduct in discharge of your duties as seamen.

“The pay-clerks of our owners are now aboard, and in a few minutes you will receive your wages. These, together with the large prizes we have been so fortunate as to make, will render you comparatively rich men. I will not be so impertinent as to interfere with your private affairs, in which I can have no business, but I may sincerely hope that, for your own sakes, you will not in a few days squander away all the money that you have been two long years in earning. If you have no poor relations to look out for, consider that a rainy day may come for yourselves. Our owners I have always found to be liberal honest men.

and if any of you are inclined to take my advice, pay into their hands whatever portions of your prize-money you feel inclined to set aside, and I will see that such sums are laid out to the best advantage, and in such a way that you can avail yourselves of them at any moment.

"I am not aware whether you have already taken any steps towards joining another ship, if not, I could wish that you would inform Mr. Pipes where you are to be found. As I am about to return to the king's service, I should be glad to know where I can at any moment lay my hand on thirty or forty true British hearts of oak, if I am so fortunate as to get with a captain deserving of them. And now, my men, whether we should ever sail together again or not, I am certain you do not want any fresh assurance of the interest I shall always take in your happiness. We have fought together many times, and never, that I know, have we yet been beaten. Wherever you may sail, then, bear this in mind. As British seamen it is your right, and never while you live, my boys, be contented with less. Now, lads, three cheers for our king and country, and then to the pay-table!"

"Such a moment," thought Fitzjohn, when the cheer had subsided; "such a moment," passing his hand across his eyes, "is worth experiencing, even though at the cost of two years' hardship and privation." Seating himself at the pay-table in his own cabin, with the owners and their clerks around him, the droll business commenced of giving the sailors their wages. Jack Tar generally brought his tarpaulin hat, into which his notes were shovelled, and one fellow having crammed all his pockets, snatched up the three last five-pound notes, and rolling them into the shape of a quid of tobacco, thrust the same into his mouth. On getting outside the door of the cabin, however, he gave a tremendous gulp, and fairly swallowed them, exclaiming, "There, — my eyes, if that don't sarve me for a rainy day, I don't know what should."

When this business was all over, and the men despatched, Fitz found that out of the thousands that day paid to his crew, the sum set by to be saved was, eleven pounds.

Our hero, now taking a post-chaise, put Mr. and Mrs. Pipes outside it, and having paid his moneys, which

amounted to something very respectable for a midshipman, into a Liverpool bank, so that he might draw for it in London, he set off, without further loss of time, for the capital. His arrival in Arlington Street being somewhat unexpected, he found no one at home, but he soon contrived to make himself so, and on the return of Lady Fitzjohn from some party, she, to her inexpressible delight, found Gentleman Jack sitting over the fire, fast asleep.

On the ensuing day, he walked out after breakfast, hired a horse, and took a ride round the parks, visiting all his old haunts, and cogitating over his future plans. The result of the said cogitation was, that he rode into Lombard Street, and drew nearly all his money from the London correspondent of the Liverpool bank in which it was placed. The clerk stared when he saw the amount of the cheque, and seemed somewhat surprised at the notes in which it was taken; but when he beheld our hero crush these up into a round ball, and thrust the same carelessly into his waistcoat-pocket, they saw at once that it was a sailor taking his prize-money, or as one of them said to the other, "some other silly fellow of that sort."

Fitzjohn and his mother, by way of enjoying each other's society, dined *tête-à-tête*. As soon as the wine was set, and the servants had withdrawn, Fitz filled his mother's glass, and not forgetting his own, drew his chair round to the fire.

"Now, my dear mother," said he, "you remember that on my first going to sea you communicated to me the sad history of yourself and my father. Since then, you have remained utterly silent on this point, and so have I. I am quite content to rest my views of this matter on your experience and judgment. All I now wish to say is, that I have made a little prize-money in this last cruise,—there it is," tossing down the ball of bank-notes; "I know not whether you have any wish to establish the legality of your marriage at present; you best know whether such a step would be prudent for your conduct, or agreeable to your feelings. If so, there is the money—I think it will prove sufficient for the expenses, and you know how welcome you are to it. Indeed, the only pleasure I had in making it, was that it might be reserved for this purpose. For my part, it would give me no additional happiness to bear the

title of a peer's eldest son, nor have I the least anxiety to make the acquaintance of a parent who takes so slight an interest in my welfare as never to have sought mine. This is a question, therefore, entirely for your own feelings. Only put the money to what end you may, it is my present to you, a slight return for the many I have had of yours."

Lady Fitzjohn did not thank her son by words; perhaps she was unable to do so, but after pressing his hand in hers, while the tears found their silent course down her cheeks, she mechanically took up the ball of paper, and disentangling its parts, smoothed them out on the table before her.

By herself, perhaps, who was least cognizant of what she was doing, the sum thus displayed was unnoticed, but to the eye of a third party there would have appeared eighteen notes—each for one thousand pounds.

"Whether the course which you mention may be the most prudent one, my dear boy, I will take time to consider," answered Lady Fitzjohn. "But as for this money——"

"Say no more about it," replied Fitz, "it is yours to do with as you please." And to prevent any reply, he left the room.

For some days after this conversation, nothing further passed on this subject between Lady Fitzjohn and her son. One morning, however, she told our hero that she had been considering the line of conduct which it would be most proper for her to adopt with regard to his father, and that she had determined to remain firm to her original intention, of not molesting him, since she had great hopes that when Fitzjohn obtained rank in the service, more especially if he was so fortunate as to distinguish himself, his father would come forward, and by voluntarily acknowledging him, do them both that tardy justice which they could so well claim. She therefore entreated Fitzjohn to remain as he had hitherto always done—silent; and only endeavour, by his efforts in his own profession, to accelerate a day that would be the happiest of a life not hitherto the most prosperous.

On hearing this judgment of the court, our hero said, "that he fully assented." So jumping up, and taking his mother in his arms, he bestowed on her ladyship one of

those hearty kisses which speak much more of honest, rough affection than is generally supposed to be consistent with the chaste decorum of Arlington Street. In return for his salute, Lady Fitzjohn slipped into his hand a certain parchment-bound volume, which she said would display to him the mode in which she had employed his prize-money. Thrusting it into his pocket, to examine it at his leisure, he took his horse and rode off to Richmond, to see the old schoolfellow for whom he had stormed the house as recorded in the beginning of these histories.

The schoolfellow had, however, that day gone to London, intending to dine at Fenton's Hotel. On leaving, Fitz baited both his nag and its master at the Star and Garter, and then rode leisurely back to London, determining to dine at Fenton's also, and go to the opera himself. Having been so fortunate as to meet his friend, they ordered the best dinner that could be given at so short a notice, and sat down a most loving pair in the coffee-room.

The champagne flowed freely; neither were afraid of that nor any of the other wines. Old stories of old days were revived—both hearts seemed to receive and obey the command of 'open sesamé;' they recounted their various misfortunes, dwelt on their separate successes, voted each other uncommonly good fellows, and all went merry as a marriage bell.

Presently, Fitzjohn, in feeling for his handkerchief, put his hand on the parchment-bound volume, with which his mother had presented him in the morning. Drawing it forth to see what it might be, he perceived it was nothing more or less than a banker's account-book, on the credit side of which was placed to "A. Fitzjohn, Esq.," the sum of eighteen thousand pounds.

"Generous-hearted creature!" thought our hero of his mother. "Comfortable floating balance for a half-pay midshipman, and a very agreeable firm to pull upon," reading in the name of "Coutts and Co.," one not less distinguished for its leading rank in British commerce, than the generous liberality that is known to mark all its dealings. Highly satisfied with his inspection, Fitz now attempted to replace the book in his pocket, but not having at this crisis the steadiest hand, it missed the mark, and fell unheeded on the carpet.

After due libations had been finished, the hour of ten striking on St. James's clock, reminded the happy pair that if they wished to see any of the opera, they had better move. This they did, going to their rooms to dress, Fitz having sent round into Arlington Street for all that was necessary. Scarcely had our hero and his friend quitted the coffee-room, than a gentleman, who had been dining at a table *vis-à-vis*, quietly rose from his seat, and first looking round the room to see that he was alone, proceeded with the greatest deliberation to pick up and examine the contents of Fitzjohn's account-book. These, to all appearance, scarcely afforded less satisfaction to him, than they had already given to Fitzjohn, for taking out his pocket-book, he made a memorandum of the same, and hearing footsteps on the stairs, replaced the little tome exactly where he had found it.

Fitz and his friend now entered ready for the King's Theatre, ordering, in the same breath, a hackney-coach for the present, and a hot supper at one o'clock.

"Ah—waiter," drawled out the strange gentleman from the other end of the room; where, with his legs stretched out on a couple of chairs, he wore every appearance of one just waking from a sound nap.—"Yes, my lord," replied the waiter.

"Don't I see something on the ground, there—what is it? See, opposite to me, I mean."—"A book, my lord, I think." Then picking it up; "O, sir, I think it must be yours," offering it to Fitz.

"Yes, by Jove, so it is," said the careless dog. "Just run up into my room, waiter, and shove it down somewhere out of sight. I am much obliged to you, sir," bowing to the stranger, "for pointing it out."—"O not at all," said the stranger. "Are you going to the opera? I am bound that way myself."

"Perhaps, then, you'll take a lift in our jarvey?" said Fitz.—"Thank ye,—thank ye! I will, as my own carriage doesn't seem to be coming; and I want to see the last act. That act is really superb—O most magnificent—O most superb! I was at Milan when it first came out—I thought La Scala would have come down about our ears!"

"Coach is at the door, sir," quoth waiter. My lord's

musical declamation was cut short, and off all three went to the opera.

On the ensuing morning, Fitzjohn was awakened by a rapping at his bedroom door.—“Come in,” said he, surlily, in reply. The waiter made his appearance. “A gentleman below, sir, wishes to speak to you.”

“Show the sinner up, but tell him I’ve not had my whack of sleep yet, and have a devil of a head-ache, therefore he’s to bear a hand, and cut his cable as soon as may be.”

In a few minutes, a most sedate, middle-aged gentleman was shown into Fitz’s presence.

“Do you want me, sir?” said our hero.—“Yes, sir,” replied his visitor; “I have been to Lady Fitzjohn’s in Arlington Street, and they told me you were here. I have to apologise for intruding on you so early, but my business would hardly bear waiting.”

“Why, what’s the matter, man? Is the devil dead?”

The sedate man shook his head, and without saying a word, withdrew from his coat-tail pocket a large black case; out of this he took a small slip of paper. “I have come to call on you from Coutts’ bank, sir. I believe,” said he, “that Lady Fitzjohn paid into your account eighteen thousand pounds, a few days since?”

“Yes, what of it?”

“Well, sir, your signature was to have been sent to us, that we might honour any drafts. Instead of this, however, a cheque has been presented this morning for nearly the whole amount, namely, seventeen thousand two hundred and sixty-nine pounds: so before paying it, I have been sent to ascertain if the signature is in your hand-writing.” As the sedate man said this, he gave the check to Fitzjohn.

“Just draw the blind up, will ye, old boy?” said our hero, “and let’s have a squint at this. I begin,” rubbing his head with a perplexed air, “to have some recollection about the matter;—supping with that d——d thief I picked up in the coffee-room. Lord Do——us, or whatever his name is, and then going out to a gambling-hell. A devil of a gentlemanly fellow with a shocking bad cough. But as for the hand-writing, that’s mine, sure enough. Look at it, old boy, that you may know it again; it’s just the fist I write, when I’m three cloths or so in the wind. There,

it's all right; good morning. Just pull the blind down again, will you? I'll do as much for you another time."

"God forbid!" muttered the sedate man, doing as he had been requested. "But what are we to do about the cheque, sir?"

"O as to that, all you have to do is to pay it. I can't say any more; good morning;" and turning round and nestling among the pillows, as if nothing should arouse him again, our hero in a few minutes more was fast asleep. The sedate gentleman, who was a Scotchman, looked at him for a moment or two in silence. Then lifting his hands, he muttered, "Goodness guide us!" and out of the room went he.

At four o'clock Fitzjohn arose to breakfast. By this sober hour he began to perceive what a very considerable ass he had made of himself. The fact was, he had fallen into the hands of one of the most noted black-legs of the day, my Lord Do——us, who, having derived from the carelessness of Fitzjohn the best information relative to his resources, had, from that moment, determined regularly to rook him. In this determination he succeeded most entirely. Having invited himself to supper with Fitzjohn, he got him to a private gaming-house, and by means of quizzing and drinking, induced him to play. His hand once in, our hero's usual impetuosity carried him forward, and he only stopped short when everything worth speaking of was lost.

"At any rate I shall be wiser next time," thought Fitzjohn; "and now, as most of my money's spent, I must look out for another ship. After all, there's a deal of bother saved me. 'Twould have been the devil's own trouble to have spent all that money in the old slow-coach way!"

Having called for the paper to see what ships might be at the outports, his eye ran over the names of several vessels and commanders, without any of them particularly striking his fancy. At last he came to the following paragraph. "We are happy to congratulate our countrymen on the appointment of that distinguished officer, Sir Sidney Smith, to command a squadron in the North Sea. The gallant commodore has hoisted his pennant on board the *Antelope*, and will, it is said, sail from the Downs next week."

"That's the man for me; if I can but manage to get with him," thought Fitzjohn, about to fling down the paper. The following advertisement, however, caught his eye, and detained it.—"The widow of a naval officer, who deserved well at the hands of his country, is in the greatest distress, which a comparatively small assistance would remove. Should this meet the eyes of the benevolent, they are implored to inquire into a case in which the smallest aid will both merit and receive the deepest gratitude."

"What a blessing," thought Fitz, "to this poor creature, would have been one-tenth of what I flung away last night!—and into the pocket of a knave! Hang me, though, if all my prize-money shall go to as little purpose. Let me see, what is there left of it?—some seven or eight hundred pounds—clearly that. Thank God! and as long as I have what'll carry me down to my ship—when I get one—that's all I care for. So I'll e'en take my hat and gloves and see into the truth of this poor widow's story."

CHAPTER XLII.

AMONG the references given in the advertisement, was one to the clergyman of the parish in which the lady lived, near Margaret Street, Cavendish Square. Fitzjohn having called on the reverend pastor, and found him at home, received the most credible assurances that his charity would not be misdirected in the contemplated channel. Hearing this, he took down the lady's address, and proceeded to pay her a visit.

As she was neither young nor pretty, good Master Reader, keep your smiles to yourself, and be so good as to give to our hero the full credit of a benevolence which had its source, as it ought ever to arise, from the warm sympathies of a kind heart, and the strong conviction that one of our first duties on earth is to assist and relieve each other.

Fitzjohn found Mrs. Davis, then, as we will call her, to be the widow of a lieutenant. She had just buried her two only children, twin girls, of eighteen, who, in the strong flush of health, had been carried off in a few days, by an attack of fever. Her husband was of long standing on the

lieutenant's list, and had gone afloat under promise of promotion. Full of hope and courage, he congratulated himself, as his ship went into action on the 1st of June, that his eagerly-desired preferment was at hand. Scarcely had his vessel received a second broadside, when his men had to bear him below, never to come up again. A cannon-ball had struck him obliquely on the hip, and in a few minutes the work of death was done.

As Fitzjohn heard the unhappy mother tell her story,—speak of the comfort and happiness she had lost—the poverty herself and girls had gone through;—how, in hopes to give them food, she had started in business;—how, by slow degrees, she had fagged with all the patience of true merit;—how she was just beginning to emerge from all her difficulties;—and, lastly, when she spoke of the worth and beauty of her dead children, Fitzjohn did not feel it any reproach to his manhood, to add one tear to her many.

Bitterly he reproached himself for his late insane extravagance, and fully he now determined to make up for it. On questioning Mrs. Davis as to how she might be assisted, he learnt that her adopted business was that of a corset-maker; that her two girls had been her principal assistants, and thus saved her considerable expense; that, in addition to their loss, all her ready money had been swallowed up in procuring little comforts for them in their illness, and committing them with decency to the earth when dead; that a quarter's rent having fallen due a few weeks since, her landlord, one of those vile wretches who disgrace humanity, had not only given her notice to quit, but announced his intention to distrain, if the money were not quickly forthcoming. What with this, the fact of her having to hire new assistants for her business, and the difficulty of suddenly getting in fashionable debts, she told Fitzjohn that she feared she would be ruined.

"Not if I can help it by a trifle," said he. "Poor soul, you have suffered ruin enough already! Great God! what ruin can equal the ruin of the heart!—No, no, my dear madam, I hope your share of sorrow has all passed. What's the sum, may I ask, that you think would set you afloat?"

"Ah, sir, that's a heavy matter! and for a young gentle-

man like you, who have so many ways of spending money, it's not to be thought of. Any trifle you could spare me would be a blessing. The clergyman is in hopes to raise a subscription; and if they can get fifty or sixty pounds for me, I hope to be able to struggle on again."

"What a sum," thought Fitzjohn, "to be allowed to harass the spirits, and help break the heart of one who has suffered so much already!"

"Well, Mrs. Davis," said he, "I am sure I hope that your subscription may succeed: and now you must allow me to leave with you something towards it."

As he said this he sat down and wrote a cheque; then folding it, and putting on his hat and gloves, he went to the door. As he expected, the widow followed and opened it for him. To utter words of consolation to one; whom nothing but the lapse of time could console, was, he felt, useless, perhaps unfeeling, he therefore shook her heartily, but silently, by the hand, and in so doing slipped into it the folded draft.

She wished to arrest and thank him; but the thing was so quickly done, it was impossible. He was gone.

With brimming eyes, but with a far more overflowing heart, she looked after him. In so doing, the wind blew open the little bit of paper she held in her hand. She looked down, expecting that the sum might be ten or fifteen pounds at the utmost. Through her tears, she saw something on it she did not exactly understand. "It never can be fifty!" she exclaimed. Nor was it. For when she could read it more distinctly, it was, she saw, for—five hundred.—We may conceive what were her feelings.

In order that the act might be complete, Fitz had determined that the poor woman should be loaded with no unnecessary sense of obligation; he had therefore only signed his cheque "A. F." and now walked down to his bankers to request that those initials might be honoured, but his name most strictly withheld, should any inquiries be made by the party applying for the money; which was done.

On his way to the Strand, who should he meet but Sir High Topham, who had just come to town on some of his special schemes. They were both delighted at the rencontre, and Sir High promised to dine with Fitz and his mother

that day, giving to our hero at parting the card of his address.

For Fitzjohn, nothing could be more apposite than thus running against Sir High, to whom he trusted for at once putting him in the way of joining Sir Sidney Smith.

On mentioning the subject to the commodore, however, our hero was much disappointed to hear that he had no personal acquaintance with the gallant officer, nor could Fitz at that moment lay violent hands on any friend, able to give him the personal introduction for which he was so anxious.

Under these circumstances Sir High Topham recommended him simply to present himself to Sir Sidney Smith, certificates in hand; which he did, and nothing could exceed the kind and gentlemanly manner in which he was received, a manner well according with the character of extreme urbanity for which he had always heard that Sir Sidney was noted.

The Antelope was of course crowded to excess with midshipmen, and Sir Sidney requested the officers of the ward-room to receive Fitz into their mess; giving our hero an order to do duty as acting-lieutenant, provided he would be satisfied with a rating as able seaman. To this arrangement Fitz consented with great pleasure. Often, during the early part of his seafaring life, had he been anxious to serve under this distinguished officer; and it may therefore be most easily supposed that the present opportunity was embraced with avidity.

A squadron being placed under Sir Sidney's command, they were ordered to the North Sea, a station the worst qualified for the admiral's constitution, and not peculiarly agreeable to that of Fitzjohn, only just arrived, as he was, piping warm from "the red hot sea," as Jack termed "the other place."

CHAPTER XLIII.

As soon as Fitzjohn found himself once more comfortably located on board a ship, he had leisure to look round him, according to the true human system, for some new subject of chagrin. For this it must be confessed that he had not

to look far, and, indeed, very readily found it in the following circumstances.

My readers will remember that our hero's "adorable" Jane was placed under charge of the redoubtable Jim Bell, and put on board the Hoogly for a passage to England. The natural impulse of Fitzjohn, on arriving once more at home, was to inquire for those in whose safety his happiness was so deeply involved. Of their return to an English port, however, which should have taken place before his own, he could hear no tidings.

With some little difficulty, it is true, he managed to trace the arrival of the Hoogly at the Cape, and ascertained the fact of her having joined the English convoy; but within ten days of the sailing of this, the commodore had lost sight of her, and here all intelligence of the ship ceased.

Our hero also ascertained that Jim Bell had, with the sanction of Mrs. Graves, insured the diamonds of the latter before sailing, but that lady's agent could say nothing as to what had become of her, and very plainly gave our hero to understand that he "had a shrewd suspicion she had gone to the bottom of the sea."

On hearing this, our hero, in departing, told the agent to "go and be d——d," and then proceeded to walk away disconsolate—*more amantium*, I may add.

From all this, my "*gentle*" reader may believe that poor Fitz was greatly "in the dumps" during the first few days of his getting on board the Antelope. His sighs were frequent, as well as his glasses of grog; and from his being often heard to mutter, "Poor Jane!—poor Jim!" his messmates had little difficulty in arriving at the fact that he was in love.

From this melancholy picture of the misfortunes that beset him, there was only one at all cheering contrast to which to turn: this was, by his mother's influence, his old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Pipes, had been, to use the latter lady's elegant expression, "quite set up again," Pipes having not only been restored once more to the "*sarvus*," but appointed to the Portsmouth ordinary, as boatswain of a seventy-four gun ship then building in that dockyard.

On first hearing of this cheering change in her husband's

fate, the joy of Mrs. Pipes knew no bounds. She engulfed and very nearly suffocated Fitzjohn in her embrace, and he only got free from the Scylla and Charybdis of her arms, by promising her his old shirts to mend, whenever he came from sea.

As, however, with such a commander, it was certain that the Antelope would soon be engaged in whatever might be the most active service on the station, Fitzjohn's thoughts of his old friends were frequently interrupted by the imperative considerations of present duty.

Having already commanded three vessels, Fitzjohn of course felt himself fully qualified to take charge of the watch in his turn. He found all his brother officers excellent good men, brave as their chief, and thirsting for an opportunity of proving it; and, as he had expected, the kindness and sincerity of Sir Sidney's manner, kept them all as friendly as good messmates ever ought to be.

Not long after sailing from the Downs, a neutral brig gave information that a French general, who had been a great crony with Bonaparte, and who had quarrelled with him, was banished to the small and low sandy island of Rottum, and there confined in the guard-house: the commodore ordered two boats, well manned and armed, to leave the ship, under the command of the officer of the watch, at midnight—to proceed to the guard-house, and bring the general off, thinking that whilst he was in a state of irritation, something of use to the nation might be learnt from him.

It fortunately happened for our hero, to be in his watch that this service was to be performed, and he took his departure at the appointed hour. Having reached the island long before daylight, as soon as he could see his way Fitz marched his men up to the guard-house; but this being loop-holed, so smart a fire was opened from it, that our hero got a wheelbarrow, and putting the launch's eighteen-pound carronade and slide into it, with the muzzle in sight, soon dragged this iron-tongued droggerman into range.

Mounting it on two skids, sufficiently high to keep the part which bolts underneath from touching the ground, Fitzjohn lost no time in opening his portable battery on the guard-house; whereupon its inmates quickly opened the door, but to the mortification of our party, they found the

general had been sent off by the inland navigation, whilst they had returned for the carronade.

A few nights after this, a cutter joined Sir Sidney's squadron, with positive orders that no effort should be spared to get an account of the number and force of the Dutch fleet, then lying in the Texel. As it was necessary to employ four or five boats on this service, the second lieutenant and Fitzjohn were despatched for this purpose, in a foggy night of drizzling rain; and as Fitz was in the fastest-rowing boat, he remained, as he thought, just outside the entrance of the Texel; but the flood-tide had carried him in faster than he had calculated, and being hailed by the sentinel at the lower battery, he let the oars rest alongside the boat at their tholes, and made his men lie down in the bottom of the boat. Meanwhile the latter continued drifting up with the tide, and the weather becoming thicker, he fancied himself close to a large wooden jetty, and desired the boatman to hook on. To the utter astonishment of all hands, however, the man hooked on to the rudder-chains of one of the enemy's line-of-battle ships. As they were not observed, however, and as they took care not to strike the ship under the counter, they remained there two hours. The guard-boat during this time passed them twice, but they were so sheltered by the shadow of the ship, as to remain unobserved.

As soon as the weather cleared up and daylight began to break, they found themselves very comfortably situated above the innermost line-of-battle ship in the enemy's fleet; but as the ebb-tide began to make, and the boat rowed well, they soon got to the Texel Point, having deliberately fulfilled the object in view, and counted every vessel in the Texel's mouth.

At this moment, however, Fitz observed two gun-boats and about eleven others in chase of him. He now made his men give way as hard as they could, and found the launch, with the carronade over her stern, waiting for them at a little distance off, together with the other boats, about half a mile further to sea. On coming up with the launch, Fitz immediately jumped into her, and as the gun-boats came on first, he, by good luck, contrived with the first shot he fired, to strike the headmost of the two, and she began to sink. By this means, himself and men had plenty

of time to get off whilst the Dutchmen were saving their sinking comrades.

The miseries of a North Sea cruise in the winter time, particularly in a ship drawing much water, and yet obliged to keep in the shallow seas, like the squadron stationed before Flushing, cannot well be imagined but by those who have experienced it. Sitting here snugly ensconced in Pump Court, Temple, with tea and toast on one side of my easy-chair, and a dumb-waiter on the other, truly it delighteth me much to recall sundry and divers middle watches on the Scotch coast in dark stormy nights, blowing half a gale of wind, and that coming round the island of Inch Keith, cold enough to bite your nose off. But what is this to the young gentleman who seeks for glory? Nothing! So we'll take one of Fitzjohn's sea evenings out of many.

In the middle of one stormy and tempestuous night with very thick weather, whilst the Antelope was lying-to off Flushing, under a close-reefed maintop-sail, the pilots became much alarmed, lest the ship would not weather some of the dangerous banks with which that coast abounds. To increase their anxiety, the position of the ship could not be ascertained, from the constant fog in which they had been enveloped for many days. Fitzjohn having the watch on deck, both pilots came to him to express their fears, and on looking over the chart with them, Fitz was obliged to confess that these appeared but too well founded.

He now, of course, went into the commodore, to make this unpleasant report; and as Sir Sidney had been confined to his bed for three weeks with a violent ophthalmia, and as his orders were never to alter the ship's course unless he was so far awake as to sit upright in his cot to give the necessary directions, Fitzjohn was obliged with extreme reluctance to awaken him, out of almost the only sleep he had enjoyed for many nights. As soon as Sir Sidney understood the exact and very dangerous position of the ship, and had given what he considered to be the necessary orders, he very calmly observed, that as in case of their being wrecked he was determined not to be again taken by Bonaparte, Fitzjohn had at once better make preparations for sawing off the poop from the hull of the ship, should it become necessary: as upon this they had six eighteen-

pound carronades, and could fight it out for some time, no doubt.

The coolness and determination with which this was spoken in those moments of danger and severe suffering, Fitzjohn never afterwards could forget. Fortunately they got through that night, but passed over the tail of a sand-bank, in water that could never have floated the Antelope on a smooth surface.

As the government at home had received advice that Bonaparte was at this time fitting out the flat-bottomed Dutch fishing-boats, to carry cavalry for the invasion of England, the commodore had orders to burn, sink, and destroy them whenever an opportunity could be found. These sweeping, though necessary orders, were naturally repugnant to his kind and humane feelings, while they were of serious consequence to our officers and men, as by means of these boats, they not only procured fresh fish and French newspapers, but also much useful intelligence, which they would always bring them with great accuracy. But however painful it was to Sir Sidney's private feelings, orders must be obeyed, and for this purpose the boats of the squadron were constantly in-shore whenever the weather would permit it. Just at daybreak one morning, with the breeze off the land, our men came upon sixty-nine of them on the beach, abreast of the little town of Scheveling. Those which were well afloat, they cut adrift from the hawsers that held them, and hoisting their foresails and jibs, sent them off to sea by themselves; while those they could not get afloat, they were obliged to burn. The troops and the crews of the fishing-boats kept up a heavy fire of musketry on our people, and occasioned the loss of some men; an officer of marines, a volunteer in the expedition, received a musket-ball which struck him in the neck. It being a very cold morning, he had fortunately put on an extra silk handkerchief, and the ball having passed through seven folds of silk, made an indent in the flesh, from which he speedily recovered; but to the multiplicity of the folds he was entirely indebted for his life.

A few nights after the capture of these fishing-boats, Fitz was despatched in an eight-oared cutter to land a spy who had just been sent out to the squadron from England under special orders. Having got him on shore at about

two o'clock in the morning, he, thinking the hour rather late, wished to return to the ship, to which Fitzjohn objected, accompanying him instead to the gates of the town, to which he desired to go. Previous to starting, Fitz had given orders to the midshipman of the boat to remain at a grapnel a short distance from the beach, until half an hour before daylight, and if he did not return by that time, to come to the same place every successive night for three nights.

After a walk of two hours, Fitzjohn reached the town, and took leave of the spy, fancying he could find his way back with ease. Happening, however, to take a wrong turning, he came directly on a guard-house, and seeing it quite impossible to get away, at once walked up to the sentinel. As soon as the latter challenged him with "*Qui vive ?*" Fitz answered, "*Contrabandier Anglais,*" and requested shelter in the guard-house from the inclemency of the weather. It was a cold February morning, with an easterly wind.

Before starting from the ship, Fitz had taken the precaution of pulling off his uniforms and putting on the following dress: Grey-worsted stockings, with high farmer's shoes, and a pair of brass buckles, half-worn corduroy breeches, buckled at the knee, and a common yellow-striped waistcoat with large buttons, red neckerchief, and round broad-brim slouched hat. In addition to this disguise, Fitz had sewn in the cape of his coat a certificate of his being John Brown, citizen of the United States—he had provided himself with a list of articles he intended purchasing to smuggle into England, and a supposed letter of credit upon a house in Amsterdam to pay for the smuggled goods.

The French officer on guard examined him very strictly, even to the marks on his linen and stockings, all of which bore J. B. on them; and having asked for his papers, Fitz ripped open his collar and explained to the French officer that he called himself an American to prevent being impressed by any English man-of-war. The great and most serious difficulty our hero had to encounter, was that of explaining where he landed.

For this purpose Fitzjohn requested to see a map, which was shown him, though not very wisely, since the only pur-

pose for which he wanted it was that he might thereby learn how to find the way to his boat; and as the guard-house was, as he had hoped, marked on the map, he by this means knew exactly which route to pursue. As soon as Fitz pointed out a pretended spot of landing, very different from the true one, the Frenchman was satisfied, and Fitz, instead of going away, as he knew he should be well watched, requested permission to lie down on the same guard-bed as the soldiers used.

This great favour was granted him, together with a broad hint, that he would be taken up to the mayor in the morning. Fitz now feigned sleep, then, while all were snoring, got up very quietly, and when the drowsy sentinel's back was towards him, turned round the corner of the guard-house, and ran as hard as his legs could carry him.

The sentinel, hearing the noise, awoke to life, and fired, but missed his aim: his firing, however, alarmed the horse patrol on the beach, who galloped after our hero, and as the sand was very deep, they soon overtook him. In this extremity Fitzjohn's presence of mind did not desert him, but throwing himself down in an instant, both horses jumped over him without the least injury to himself.

By the leap of the horses, one dragoon lost his pistol, which he held in his hand ready to fire at Fitzjohn; this he picked up, and was on his legs again in a minute, still running towards the boat, and possessed of the additional advantage of having got some distance a-head, from the great difficulty his pursuers had in turning their horses round.

By great good fortune one horse presently stumbled and nearly threw his rider, and Fitz firing the pistol at the other who still followed, so far delayed him as to gain time for running into the water, and getting hold of his boat just as the crew had weighed their grapnel.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A FEW weeks after the narrow escape of our hero just narrated, he found himself rowing up one of the arms of the sea which run between the numerous islands on the coast of Holland, some seventeen miles distant from its entrance;

and just at the extreme high tide, he discovered, about three o'clock in the morning, a jetty which ran far out, and within its shelter three vessels, ready to sail. One was laden with corn, the other with dry goods, and the third a vessel which afterwards proved to have on board forty-nine passengers of all ages and both sexes. Fitzjohn having placed four armed men within and across the inner part of the pier, to prevent any alarm being given to the town, he very deliberately hauled the two first-mentioned vessels out; and getting them fairly under sail, he then went on board the passage vessel with another party of four men, and being unwilling to stain his sword with blood, unless at the last extremity, he walked quietly down into the main cabin with three of his myrmidons, and astonished the numerous birds of passage by telling them they were prisoners to a British man-of-war. Not having seen the ship off the coast, they could not believe the fact; Fitz, nevertheless, made every one of them get into their sleeping berths, and left one armed man in the cabin, with plenty of lights, and orders in case the male passengers attempted to rush out on him, to fire off his pistol, though not at any one. He then gave the passengers themselves to understand, that they were prisoners to one of the most humane and kind-hearted men in the world, whose lieutenant he was, and who commanded the squadron outside; and that although he was not at liberty to say as much, still he had no doubt but that the non-combatants would be released, provided there was no attempt at a rescue. On mentioning the name of Sir Sidney they all recognised it, and promised perfect submission.

Whilst Fitz was below, thus diplomatising, the captain of the vessel, one mate and three of his sailors, came alongside the jetty to get on board their craft, and as Gentleman Jack had desired his men to let all come down that liked, except any very superior force, and none return, our hero had no sooner come on deck, than the first man he encountered was the captain, a powerful fellow of about six feet high.

As this good personage was also owner of the passage vessel, nothing could exceed his wrath and passion at finding his property so entrapped.

In the first moment of rage, himself and four men sur-

rounded Fitzjohn, who, although he had his drawn sword in his hand, was determined to act as leniently as possible; and therefore, to save bloodshed, he calmly reasoned with him on the folly of attempting any resistance: but the captain was not at all in a reasonable mood, so he seized Gentleman Jack's neckcloth, and our hero would inevitably have been backed overboard, had he not given his opponent a blow in the mouth with the hilt of his sword which displaced some of his head-railing, after which, putting him and all his crew down the fore-scuttle, he upset a heavy crate of crockeryware on it, thereby effectually keeping them down, and then put to sea with his prizes.

The boats of the squadron were now constantly in-shore, watching the numerous invasion boats and praams that were fitting out for a visit to Old England; from which circumstance this part of the coast was generally considered the post of honour.

The form of the enemy's invasion vessels was certainly excellent, and from drawing so little water, might possibly, under determined commanders, have passed where our men-of-war could not have followed, over the numerous shoals which form the mouth of the Thames, and where, by their means, many thousand French troops might have been landed: owing to the unceasing activity of Sir Sidney, however, the enemy were continually losing some of their coasting craft; and small as the commodore's means were, many hundred miles of their coast were kept in a constant state of alarm.

Previous to the squadron going home to refit, after having kept the sea during the greater part of a very severe winter, the commodore had determined to make a general reconnaissance of the enemy's ports by the boats of the squadron, under his own personal observation. Putting himself for this purpose on board a hired cutter, it was by good fortune during Fitzjohn's watch that he went away; our hero therefore of course attended him. Sir Sidney, by following this simple, but most excellent rule of never selecting an officer for any particular duty, but always taking it for granted that the officer of the watch was equal to the task, did that which is deserving of the highest praise. In the first place, no favouritism was shown, all were kept well together, the talents of every man became developed, and

each learnt to rely on his own resources when danger was at hand.

After beating up the Weeling Channel upon the flowing tide, and having distinctly counted the enemy's fleet in the basin at Flushing, as well as every gun mounted on its well-appointed batteries, Sir Sidney was returning in his cutter to join the squadron, which awaited him outside: in doing so, however, the cutter took the ground, abreast of a heavy seventeen-gun battery, and, as the tide ebbed rapidly, the vessel very soon became dry.

The enemy were not long in letting our friends know that they were in reach of his guns, and every succeeding shot after the first one or two went through the cutter. To make matters worse the vessel had unfortunately heeled towards the shore, so that her crew could not even fire her pop-guns, four-pounders, to cover themselves with the smoke.

Meanwhile the anxious eye of the senior captain of Sir Sidney's squadron, soon perceived the critical situation of his gallant commodore; and having ordered to his assistance the boats of the squadron, they pulled up with all the ardour of British seamen to save a chief they adored. The strong ebb tide of the Scheldt, however, and a distance of fourteen miles to pull up against it, left our friends a certainty of being under the enemy's fire for at least four hours.

Yet it was in vain that Fitzjohn solicited the commodore to take the only boat belonging to the cutter, and join the squadron before dark, well knowing the avidity with which the enemy would capture, as a prisoner worth any risk in taking, the man who, at St. Jean d'Acre, had with a handful of British seamen withstood, for sixty-three days, the siege of twelve thousand French soldiers.

Nothing, however, could induce the commodore to quit the cutter: and as she was soon left dry by the rapidly-ebbing tide, he ordered Fitzjohn to send the officers and crew down on the sand, that the men might be protected by the vessel herself, from the fire of the battery, which was tearing her to atoms.

When Fitz reported them all below, he had great hopes that Sir Sidney would have proposed that they should follow; but nothing appeared further from his intentions, and

as our hero's personal safety was at stake, he could not well broach the proposition, although he sincerely wished the question might soon be taken into consideration.

There are few things less pleasing in the agreeable art of war, than that of standing to be shot at, without being able to divert one's attention by returning the fire, even if there is a doubt of its efficacy. Having once enjoyed this position myself during some five hours for the sum of four pounds eleven shillings and nine pence, it has left so clear a notion of its eligibility on my mind that I do not intend to repeat it—at least until they raise the pay. Our hero, however, was still worse off, his lot was all fire and no pay. But still it was vastly amusing.

The sharp eye of the commodore was chiefly employed in observing the direction the enemy's shot were likely to take, giving the while a sort of clinical lecture on projectiles. Not unfrequently he recommended Fitz to move further off, as a shot directed for him might take the person next to him, and very often the shot passed between them; so that had he not followed his chief's advice, we may suppose he would have had one or two in the bread-basket, where—see Guthrie on Gun-shot Wounds—they are not generally found to digest. While the French were thus giving their balls in hopes that the English would return them with a rout, Fitz observed some gun-boats hauling out of the basin at Flushing, and as the muzzles of their long cannon protruded over their bows, he began to think that, in a very short time, what between the fire of the battery and the gun-boats, there would not be so much as a toothpick left of the unfortunate cutter. Still the English men-of-war's boats were pulling up against the stream with all their ardour, and Fitz observed to the commodore, that the gun-boats were loading their guns, to which Sir Sidney replied, "that as the shooting season was evidently about to commence, it would be as well to have a cup of coffee *before* the *battue*—for they might not get it after."

The horrified countenance of the poor steward when Fitz-john hailed him over the cutter's bulwark, to come up and make some coffee, was a thing almost worth being so shot at, to see. "Coffee! coffee! sir," said he, "who in their senses would think of coffee now? Don't you see them ere gun-boats with their long-toms coming down upon us?"

We shall all be in Davy's locker before long. Lord bless my heart, how can I make coffee in such a *go* as this?"

On receiving this reply, Fitz asked him if he was afraid.

"Afraid!" said he, "we'll soon see that;" and in another minute he was upon deck and as nimble as a lamplighter. Before, however, he could commence his operations a shot had swept the caboose from the cutter's deck.

"Thank ye!" quoth Sir Sidney, "I think the enemy might have left us our coffee-pot; but since they have been so spiteful, you may go over the side again, steward."—The steward was out of sight in a twinkling.

As our boats were obliged to keep close to the opposite shore, to avoid the strong current as much as possible, Sir Sidney and Fitz observed the single mast of a vessel over a neck of land, which vessel fired on our boats as they passed the mouth of the creek she was guarding. From the commodore's observations, Fitz thought her fire would not last long; while none of the batteries fired at the boats, the commodore having, on his first arrival on the station, sent word to the general commanding the district, that if he let us alone we should not molest his batteries, to which proposition he was too glad to accede, as he well knew the enterprising character of the officer to whom he was opposed.

Just as the sun set, the boats of the squadron arrived alongside what remained of the cutter, while the gun-boats, seeing this, got back as fast as their oars could row them: on quitting the wreck of the cutter, Fitz made way for the commodore to go first—but with the coolness of a ball-room he observed,—“In times of danger the commodore's privilege is to go last,” which he did—and in due time, Sir Sidney and his gallant followers arrived on board the ——— frigate, where they were most joyously received. The first thing that the commodore did before going below, was to point out the vessel that had fired on his boats to the captain of the frigate, making at the same time some remark not heard.—At two o'clock the next morning, the vessel in question, which proved to be a French revenue guard cutter, was lying a prize alongside the British man-of-war.

It was on the 31st of March, 1804, that a general sweep, on a very greatly-extended line, was ordered to be made by

the boats of the squadron, previous to its return to England. The right, or western division of boats was placed under the captain of the frigate, and the eastern division under one of the senior lieutenants of the commodore's ship.

In this division Fitzjohn had the good fortune to be put in command of the launch, carrying a twelve-pound caronade in her bows, on the *non-recoil* principle. The boats having left the ship at the usual hour after dusk, during the fall of a calm drizzling rain, the soldiers of the enemy were most of them in their boxes on shore; while afloat, the watch upon deck were hiding their heads under the shelter of the bulwarks. Under these circumstances, our jolly tars anticipated good sport. As the boats proceeded, they rowed up the very same branch of the river from which Fitz had taken the three vessels a few evenings before. The commanding lieutenant, keeping the post of honour, led up in-shore, and finding a vessel laden with fascines, at once boarded and brought her off without any resistance from the crew. But as this act alarmed the sentinels on shore, the guard, aided by the townspeople, opened a pretty smart fire of musketry, and as the launch drew more water than the other boats, Fitz was kept from coming to close quarters.

The rain now ceasing for a few minutes, the boats observed a large galliot lying without them, with boarding nettings triced up, and, from the lights in her ports, evidently prepared to fire into them. From her loom, she appeared quite capable of taking her own part, and was soon made out to be the guard-vessel. On ascertaining this point, the captured vessel was immediately consigned to the care of the jolly-boat, and word passed to get everything ready for boarding the enemy before she could annoy them with her long guns.

The launch being the highest boat out of the water, Fitz proposed, and obtained leave, to lead the way; and as the current was running strongly out to seaward, Fitz pulled for the guard-vessel's bow, having two bowmen ready to hold on, which the size of the boat required. By good management our hero contrived to reach what the sailors call the bluff of the bow; and as the bowman was passing the painter of the launch, underneath the bowsprit shroud, which comes well aft in this species of rigged vessel, he was shot dead. The second bowman then caught hold, and

Fitzjohn himself, and three of his men, were standing on the gunnel of the launch, endeavouring to get on board the guard-vessel, when some of the smaller boats, coming stem on, so shook her, that all four were thrown back among the thwarts. At this moment, the enemy discharged a long nine-pounder into them, but the shot going over the gunnel of the launch, rattled in among the smaller boats outside of her.

By this discharge, both the senior lieutenants were wounded, and the command devolved on Fitzjohn. The fight was now becoming serious, and as several of the launch's crew were killed and wounded, she kept falling astern. Fitzjohn plainly saw that only the utmost exertions could secure a triumph. But this—a Briton's right—he, true to his own principles, was determined at any cost to obtain.

"Now, my brave fellows," cried Fitzjohn, cheering his men, "this is the time to show your mettle! Remember you are Sidney Smith's boys, every one of you! Stick to your stuff heartily for a few minutes, and we'll soon physic these d——d Dutchmen! Forward there, my lads! lay hold of the launch's painter—pass it through the enemy's rudder-chains, and make fast, close home to her counter. Coxswain, my boy, jump to the bows with me, and let's give these fellows some thirty rounds of our carronade, right up through her counter."

"Aye, aye!" quoth the coxswain; "never say die. Jim, my boy, whip the coin out from under her breech—clap in a couple of round shot, and a case of canister."

"That's right, my lads! bravo!" cried Fitz, as he saw how gloriously his plan answered. "Robertson and Webb, you two will be quite enough to work this gun—stick it well into them, and never mind bringing their gingerbread work about your ears. You're so sheltered under the stern, it's next to impossible they can touch you with their small arms, even if it didn't rain so hard that scarcely one musket in five will go off. That's your sort, Webb! that's right!—Fire away. Now, my lads, the rest of you follow me, while I muster the small boats, and board this obstinate rascal at all points."

Giving our hero a hearty cheer, his men sprang after him into a cutter, which had drifted alongside the launch, from the fact of all her crew being killed or wounded. Lifting

their comrades as gently as they could into the larger boat, they lost no time in getting their oars out, and with considerable difficulty Fitzjohn was now able to muster men enough for one six and one eight-oared cutter.

Finding that if he wished for success, nothing was left for him but to seize it sword in hand by boarding, he uttered a few inspiring words to the baffled seamen, and the two boats dashed off once more for the guard-vessel.

Meanwhile, the two men whom our hero had left in the launch did their duty most gallantly, Round after round they poured into the Dutchman, right up through his counter, cabins, and quarter-deck, and at every discharge away flew the splinters, followed by volleys of execrations, for they could not get at them with any more effectual discharge.

While the attention of the Dutch was thus partially distracted, Gentleman Jack, with his two boats, came rowing up on the in-shore side of the galliot. Here, however, his men's spirits received another severe check, by the unexpected discharge of a six-pounder into his own, the largest boat, which killed and wounded so many men, that Fitzjohn was barely able to find six men to board with himself.

"Never say die, my boys!" cried Fitz, waving his sword as the boat came alongside; "it will be our turn presently," and in another second he stood upon the deck, with his coxswain behind him.

Here he found the crew ranged round the gangway in a circle, bristling with boarding-pikes, and evidently worn with the long continuance of the fight and the great exertions they had made. The gallant Dutch captain himself, stood with his drawn sword uplifted in his right hand, while with his left he supported his body on a quarter-deck gun; having already received two musket-wounds.

The kind nature of Fitzjohn was at once affected by this sight, and he determined to see if he would not accept of quarter.

"*Rendez-vous, monsieur!*" said he, to the captain.

"*Je ne veux pas,*" was the reply, and at this defiance the pikes of his men were instantly raised, to put to death the few bold boarders.

In this extremity there was no help for it, but in the alternative of "thou or I must die;" so springing forward with a vigour for which his adversary was not prepared, the

feeble guard of the Dutch captain was speedily beat down. Fitzjohn's sword passed through his body, and the brave but obstinate commander fell dead at our hero's feet.

When the Dutchmen beheld the death of their spirited chief, they naturally became somewhat disheartened by it, but still fought on like devils of the true Dutch dogged breed. But the guard-ship's decks were absolutely so crowded with men, that they had no room to oppose our friends, whose numbers were so small as not to be at all in each other's way.

After twenty minutes' hard personal fighting, the decks were at last cleared, and having got all the enemy's crew below, and put the hatches on, upsetting a gun over the same, to keep them down, Fitz and his party began to prepare for getting to sea.

Gentleman Jack's sword having broken off close to the handle, whilst on the forecastle, he came aft almost unarmed, having only his last remaining pistol loaded in his belt. Seeing none but killed and wounded lying around him, he little imagined that any danger could be near. when suddenly a French officer jumped up from the deck and attacked him sword-in-hand. Our hero having closed with this sanguinary resurrectionist, just in time to prevent the point of his sword being thrust into his face, seized him in his grasp with redoubled rage and force from this act of treachery. Getting his back against the mast, by dint of main strength, he, with his unarmed hand, so crushed in his antagonist's breast-bone, that the French officer, unable to articulate a single sound, gradually trembled and sank, dying under Fitzjohn's hands.

"The battle once ended,
The battle once ended,
The heart of the lion
Is changed to the lamb."

So runs the old song, and never was it more completely verified than after the determined and sanguinary conflict just recorded. A generous kindness to our subdued enemies and their wounded, contributes, more than any other trait in the British character, to excite the admiration and respect of mankind. It is the noblest prerogative of true valour, and will, I sincerely hope, only cease to mark us out, when we have neither enemies to conquer nor

prisoners to protect. Even taking a less elevated and proper view of the question, such a line of conduct forms also by far the best policy ; for the man who knows he will be maltreated or put to death if he surrenders, will fight more desperately against the enemy who does so, than against the enemy who takes care of him after he surrenders. And here I beg leave to hint to our French neighbours, that they have great room for improvement, since some of their proceedings in the last war. To return to our story.

As soon as John had fairly got possession of the guard-vessel, and secured the crew, he found that these had originally consisted of eighty-eight men ; and that the probability of her being boarded had in every way been considered, as appeared by the captain's instructions.

Gentleman Jack now lost no time in cutting her cable and making sail on her ; but she had been so shattered in hull, masts, and rigging, that she drifted on the sand-bank, which the half-ebb tide had left nearly dry.

The killed and wounded on the English side, amounting to seventeen, were sent off to the ship in the launch, towed by two of the smaller boats. When Fitzjohn had time to look about him he observed several large and well-manned gun-boats coming down to the assistance of his prize. Finding this to be the case he at once abandoned his original intention of lying her dry on the sand, stopping her leaks, and repairing her rigging, so as to take her off to the squadron ; and he was also obliged to give up the idea of burning her, as he had no place or boat sufficiently capacious to allow of his previously removing her wounded crew, which, including the killed, amounted to upwards of thirty ; and to set her on fire, leaving them on board, was an atrocity worthy of a Malay, but not to be contemplated by a British seaman.

Under all these circumstances our hero contented himself with bringing away her colours, cutting her rigging to pieces, firing through her bottom, and then leaving her at daybreak to the gun-boats, which came down and took quiet possession.

The commodore, who was highly delighted with the results of the evening's work, wrote to the Dutch government without delay, acquainting them with the reason why the vessel had not been fired, mentioning to them in the

strongest terms the gallant conduct of her late brave captain, and recommending his widow and children to their grateful consideration; a recommendation to which instant attention was paid.

Amid the heart-rending desolations of unsparing war it is some consolation to those whose joy and pride is in the kindlier feelings of our nature, to consider that even the horrors of bloodshed need not be unmitigated, since, as in the present instance, it affords many opportunities for one noble heart to extend its sympathy and assistance to another, although it should be found to beat in the bosom of a foe.

For this gallant action, and the determination evinced in it, under no ordinary difficulties, Fitzjohn, as well as the two commissioned officers, received a patriotic sword.

As this was the first "patriotic sword" that the committee at Lloyd's had ever given, our hero was allowed the option of this or fifty guineas, the sum at which the weapon was valued. It may be imagined that he would not have hesitated a moment even had the money been of ten times the amount. His joy, too, at first seeing himself in the Gazette was intense: and when he buckled on the splendid sword that his own gallantry had won, he began to hope that he really should turn out a hero after all. The shape of this said trophy was that of a large massive sabre; all the mountings were of a very solid pattern, richly chased, and formed out of silver gilded; the handle was of the same material, and formed to represent a beautiful emblematic device. The hilt of the blade itself was first cased in ivory, surmounted with the head and skin of the Nemæan lion; the front of the guard was in the shape of the Roman fasces, the top of which was connected with the lion's head by the club of Hercules, round which was turned the serpent; while, where the handle joined the steel there came a handsome wreath of laurel. The whole was nicely arranged in a mahogany case, which contained one or two cards, interpreting the device of the handle as follows. "National Union, figured by the Roman fasces, produces Herculean efforts, of which the club of Hercules is emblematic, which, aided by Wisdom, denoted by the Serpent, lead to victory, implied by the skin of the Nemæan Lion—the proudest of that hero's trophies. The wreath of laurel de-

notes that rewards await the brave, who shall successfully wield their swords in the cause of their country, and in defence of British security, independence, and honour."

As the sword was received in the commodore's cabin he allowed our hero to enjoy his ecstasies in full; and just when he was about to go below, and show his acquisition to his expectant messmates, his superior officer produced a packet, and tossing it over to Gentleman Jack, said, "Here, Fitzjohn, I suppose is something from your friends; open it, and let's hear the news."

With some little flurry the cause of which he had hardly time to analyse, Fitz broke the seal, and there beheld his commission as lieutenant for this action. His delight was at its climax; the commodore shook him warmly by the hand, and opening the cabin-door for him to pass out, said, as he patted him on the shoulder, "You now know the way in which promotion is to be won, and if you do not forget it your country never will."

CHAPTER XLV

SHORTLY after the promotion of our hero as lieutenant, an opportunity offered of his obtaining command of a gun-brig on the Channel station. Though loth to leave the ship of his distinguished commodore, he found himself utterly unable to pass by the chance of once more having a craft to himself, however small she might be.

With these feelings he shifted his traps on board the Xantippe gun-brig, and taking a kind leave of all his late messmates, made sail down the Channel to get himself under the command of Commodore Sir Edward Owen, then commanding his majesty's vessels off Boulogne.

On the very day after his joining, he being in the Xantippe, well up to windward in-shore, and the squadron further out to sea to leeward, a French praam, much to our hero's delight, attempted to lay him on board.

Conscious that all his brother officers on the station were looking on, and ready to judge of the character of the newcomer from his conduct in this action, Gentleman Jack said to himself, "I think, my boy, you've caught a tartar," and stood quietly on towards the Frenchman, not caring a

fig whether he got the weather-gage, or fought to leeward, provided only he could bring her into action with the least loss of time.

Whilst standing on, however, towards the praam, who was coming down in one fell swoop, with all the land breeze in her favour, two huge French gun-boats, who were hovering near, crowded all sail in an oblique course, and, putting themselves between him and the squadron to seaward, thought, no doubt, that the Xantippe was their own.

In this opinion even the commodore himself was almost afraid that he must join, and Fitzjohn plainly saw a movement in the course of the three most weatherly vessels to try to lay up for his rescue. "Well, well," thought he, "I may be in more danger than I imagine; but at any rate whoever takes the Xantippe shall have no great bargain."

At this moment the Frenchman closed with him, and the weather spare anchor of the brig, hooking a little before the bluff of the praam's lee bow, her captain taking advantage of his great superiority in number of men, attempted to board. Fitzjohn, however, seeing the mistake thus made by the Frenchman, before he had passed any midship or after lashing, at once hove all aback, and the brig getting sternway, while her anchor still held fast her assailant, poor Johnny Crapeau had not a gun to fire. The praams having few guns on their broadside, while our hero, with five of his foremost guns, commanded the whole of the praam's decks in diagonal position, Fitz did not fail to make the most of his advantage, by plying his foe with double-shotted broadsides for nearly half an hour.

Meanwhile the larger of the French gunboats ran under the Xantippe's lee, and Fitz, suddenly turning round in the heat of action, beheld a remarkably fine, handsome fellow, who was her captain, standing on the roundhouse abaft. For a moment this rather puzzled him; but he soon saw that monsieur had been so daring as to board him over the quarter alone, and now stood with his cocked hat in one hand, and his drawn sword waving in the other, calling to his vessel's crew below, "*Allons, mes enfans! Allons!*" But "*mes enfans*," finding the wind rather too cold that day, or the guns too loud, happened to be very deaf, and devil a one made his appearance.

"*Rendez-vous, monsieur!*" cried Fitzjohn, levelling at

the intruder a short rifle that he always kept on the capstan. Monsieur's only reply was another call upon "*mes enfans*."

"Come, come," said Fitz, "you're too fine a fellow by half for the French navy!" so discharging his piece, the ball passed through the heart of the poor boarder, and the gallant young Frenchman, springing into the air, fell dead on the deck of the *Xantippe*.

At this instant, one of "*mes enfans*" poked his nose over the brig's bulwark, but looking down on his late commander, he shook his head, cried out "*mort bleu!*" and slipped back to whence he came with all the expedition imaginable.

The gun-boat to which this retreating hero belonged, now shoved off as quickly as possible, and the other taking the hint also, the daring pair laid up for the harbour of Boulogne, while yet it was in their power. The captain of the praam, finding himself thus deserted and a great part of his men lying slaughtered on his deck, hauled down his colours, when Gentleman Jack, lashing his prize alongside, made sail on both, and thus victoriously ran down to his squadron. The first vessel that he passed was a frigate, commanded by a young post-captain, who, as the *Xantippe* and her prize went by, manned his rigging with his crew, and saluted our hero with three hearty cheers—a tribute to the bravery of himself and crew, which so delighted the latter, that despite of the wounds of many, and the fatigue of all, they voluntarily sprang into the rigging, and returned the compliment.

Our hero was now sent to cruise near Scilly, for the *protection of the trade*.

As some of the fast-sailing French privateers had been hovering on the coast, the sending of such a vessel as the *Xantippe* was nearly equal to the sending a cow to catch a hare. The only chance of success, therefore, which Fitz possessed was by disguising his craft.

For this purpose, he had recourse to short four-top-gallant-masts, dry casks, painted like bales of goods over the quarters, &c., and other tricks, to give the *Xantippe* the appearance of a trader.

One winter evening, a little before sunset, Jack observed a large and suspicious schooner to windward. He immediately made all the fuss possible, apparently to be in a great

hurry to get away, and to shape his course for Cork, setting his studding-sails one after the other, so that the day closed, leaving the *Xantippe* under all sail fear would have induced her captain to make, had she really been what she seemed.

As soon as it was dark, all the stay and studding-sails were taken in; and at two o'clock in the morning, Monsieur Crapeau came under the brig's stern, and after firing two or three musketoons into her without saying a word, at last condescended to hail.

Fitzjohn now hauled up his mainsail, one clew-line at a time, with a "Yeo, ho! yeo, ho!" like a true merchanter.

"Where was you go?" demanded the Frenchman. "New York," answered Fitzjohn.

"Where you was come from, den?" returned monsieur. "New York," repeated Fitz.

"What you have got in for load?" demanded Johnny. "New York," reiterated Fitz.

"*Diable* New York!" cried the Frenchman, and our hero heard him dash his speaking-trumpet on the deck with rage. As, however, the brig was still going free, with her yards braced up, he kept by the wind; and when well on her weather quarter, Fitzjohn soon made out that he was double the *Xantippe's* size, and went three feet for her two.

When the privateer had got almost a-beam, he hoisted out an apparently very long galley, filled with men, and then edged away, towing this boat under his lee-quarter, and just clear of the stern. Meanwhile Fitzjohn had all his men at quarters, with the carronades double shotted, and a handful of grape in them, to boot, as well as all the half-ports ready to shove out, and thus unmask their battery.

At this time the *Xantippe* was going about three knots and a half an hour, when presently the privateer hailed and fired her musketoons.

"Why you no bring-to?" cried monsieur, very angrily, as his boat shoved off; then as soon as the boat was between the brig and the schooner, he called out again, "'Spose you no bring-to, me sink you."

On hearing this threat of the privateer, out went the brig's half-ports, and away flew her broadside into him. The main tack was hauled on board, down went the helm, and the jib-boom passed smack through his fore and aft

main-sail, just abaft the luff. Of course the after-leech gave way, and Fitzjohn, seeing he could not hold on his opponent, soon righted the helm, boxed off, and was on the same tack with him, but with as much chance of coming up with the chase, as the aforesaid cow with the aforesaid hare.

However, as the privateer's long-boat full of men was seen no more, Fitzjohn supposed that it had been sunk by his broadside; while the next morning he observed Johnny "afar off," some miles on the weather-beam, with a triangle round the head of his fore-mast, repairing damages, so that although not taken, he was, as we Pats say, "made to lave that."

CHAPTER XLVI.

FROM the Scilly station, on which we left Fitzjohn in the last chapter, our hero was next ordered off to the Irish coast. Soon after his arrival, there happened one of those disastrous wrecks which every now and then afford the sternest proof, that even the skill, discipline, and admirable appointment of the king's navy cannot always ensure safety to his seamen.

The duty with which Gentleman Jack was now charged, was the guard of the north-west coast of Ireland; and whilst the Xantippe was lying one morning in Tarbert Roads, at the entrance of the Shannon, a signal was made from Achill Head, for an enemy in sight.

Having forthwith slipped his cable, Fitzjohn immediately made all sail in the direction in which the signal station had pointed out the enemy to be.

The sun rose with particular splendour; and just as the glorious orb was clear of the horizon, the Xantippe was under all sail by the wind.

Fitzjohn, on passing the bittacle in which the barometer hung, observed it to be several lines lower than he had ever seen it, and the signal post having annulled the signal for an enemy, he commenced shortening sail, and preparing for the change of weather, which the barometer but rarely indicates without just cause.

In the course of a short time, he discovered that the supposed strange sail was his majesty's frigate *Saldanah*, commanded by the Honourable Captain Pakenham. Having passed within hail of her, he perceived she was accompanied by two other frigates, and about thirty-six sail of homeward-bound West Indiamen under convoy. But a very few minutes had elapsed after his joining company with them, when the sky suddenly changed, and the inky clouds began to show themselves from seaward; at the same time the wind huffed, and the distant thunder rolled out its sonorous peals, followed by occasional flashes of lightning.

These were but too certain indications of the truth of his weather-glass; and observing that the *Saldanah* still ran towards the shore for shelter, Fitzjohn telegraphed the frigate to know how her barometer stood. The answer to this inquiry showed it to agree with that on board the *Xantippe*, in which vessel Fitzjohn was bent on getting as much to seaward as possible.

As the wind freshened, the sail was reduced, and the top-gallant-masts and yards sent on deck.

By twelve o'clock, the wind had increased to a perfect tempest. The sea got up, and having the whole reach of the great Atlantic, soon ran literally mountains high.

Signals of distress were made in the course of the evening from the deep-laden West India ships, while the convoying men-of-war could only answer them with their guns. During the whole of that night, the gale went on increasing, if possible, and when day broke, what a melancholy sight was there!

The *Saldanah* was wrecked; the whole of her crew, together with the gallant Pakenham, had perished. One of the convoy frigates had lost a foremast and bowsprit, and the other a mizenmast. Seven West-Indiamen were dismasted, eleven sunk, and almost all the rest disabled in some way or other during the night's gale.

On this appalling proof of the resistless power of the elements, some beautiful lines were written by Mr. Sheridan; and as they are not easily met with, I will insert some of them from a charming little collection arranged by a courteous and accomplished acquaintance.*

* Sir Harris Nicholas.

“ ‘Britannia rules the waves !’
Heard'st thou that dreadful roar ?
Hark ! 'tis bellow'd from the caves
Where Lough Swilly's billow raves,
And three hundred British graves
Taint the shore.

“ No voice of life was there ;
'Tis the dead that raise that cry,
The dead who raised no prayer
As they sank in wild despair,
Chaunt in scorn that boastful air,
Where they lie.

“ ‘Rule Britannia !’ sung the crew,
When the stout Saldanah sailed,
And her colours as they flew,
Flung the warrior-cross to view,
Which in battle to subdue,
Ne'er had failed.

“ Bright rose that laughing morn,
That morn that seal'd her doom ;
Dark and sad is her return,
And the storm-lights faintly burn,
As they toss upon her stern,
'Mid the gloom.

“ O'er Swilly's rocks to soar,
Commissioned watch to keep,
Down, down with thundering roar,
The exulting demons pour ;
The Saldanah floats no more
O'er the deep.

“ The dreadful hest is past,
All is silent as the grave ;
One shriek was first and last,
Scarce a death-sob drank the blast
As sank her tow'ring mast
Beneath the wave.

“ ‘Britannia rules the waves !’
O vain and impious boast !
Go mark, presumptuous slaves !
Where He who sinks or saves,
Scars the sands with countless graves
Round your coast.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

SOME days after the unfortunate catastrophe of the *Saladanah*, Fitzjohn was lying at single anchor in Cork Harbour ready for sea, and waiting for orders. About ten o'clock one morning, as Gentleman Jack was standing on the poop of his brig, he observed a man-of-war barge row twice round the *Xantippe*. A post-captain in full uniform was sitting in the stern-sheets, and his coxswain at last steered for the brig's gangway.

Fitzjohn being on deck to receive his unknown superior, he was addressed by his visitor, in an accent of the broadest Scotch, as follows:—

"Weel, man, I've have had my eye on your craft for these twa days, and I'm just thinking she's more like a mon-of-war than ony frigate you see yonder;" pointing to the squadron then in the harbour. "I would, sir, that ye were my first lieutenant; I'd be holden to make ye a cop-tain in a vera short period indeed!"

"To whom have I the honour of addressing myself?" inquired Fitzjohn.

"Sir James Domm'em," replied the stranger, "and my ship's the *Platony*—one of the finest frigates in the king's service: I just had my choice. My brother, sir, sends his twa members to parliament, ye see; he always finds the minister's side the maist reasonable, and so he just votes for him. Were ye, sir, wi' me, I'd make ye a captain, I say, in a few months; and as I am going to the admiral the now, ye need but say the word, and I'll apply for ye as my first lieutenant."

Fitzjohn, on hearing this offer, was, as may well be supposed, not a little startled; he therefore thanked Sir James for his kindness, but reminded him that it would be indelicate to take the place of a brother officer without his knowledge and approbation; so that, with the captain's permission, he begged to go on board the *Platony*, and after conversing with his first lieutenant, to give him an answer in a few days.

"A few days, sir!" said Sir Jemmy. "Tut, man! I hope to be in the West Indies in a few days—as soon as I get out of sight of the admiral's flag; for I shall leave

the convoy to the sloop-of-war." This information alluded to the fact of the frigate bearing the signal for a convoy to the West Indies at her mast-head, a sloop-of-war being attached to assist her in their protection. "As for my first lieutenant," continued Sir James, "he's a d—d old signal-staff man, and no more fit to be in so fine a frigate than Jo Anderson, with his snow-white pow; and whether it's his will to remain in her or no, he shall just leave the *Platony*, or I'll break him. It's my officers' own fault if they are no sae happy as they might be! I do all in my power to make them comfortable." With this assurance Sir James said he would see Fitz very speedily for his answer, and went over the side. As soon as he was fairly beached, Fitzjohn took his boat and went on board the *Platony*. The first person he met on the quarter-deck was his old and much-esteemed friend Falcon, who had so securely toggled up his breeks at Westminster.

After the congratulations and inquiries consequent on a separation of so many years, Fitzjohn explained to Falcon the object of his visit, and begged to inquire the character and general behaviour of Sir Jemmy Domm'em, the captain. "In the first place," said Falcon, "it's now only four days since we left Plymouth Sound; and yet the second lieutenant, the master, purser, and one of the marine officers, are under arrest: the men most thoroughly hate him: all his own barge's crew, excepting the coxswain, deserted no later than last night, including the two jolly marines, who were sent to guard them with loaded muskets, and this only while the coxswain went to the admiral's house, to report the arrival of the barge to bring our worthy skipper aboard from his dinner. Out of every three words he says to his officers and men, two of them are dom'em, meaning d——n them! so that we have named him Sir James Domm'em, instead of Sir James ———. But the catalogue of his peccadilloes are so numerous, that you must stay and dine with us, and your ears will convince you of the opinion we all entertain of him."

Going down into the gun-room, Fitzjohn had hardly looked round when he beheld another of his old school-fellows and messmates, J——s, poking his head out of one of the officers' cabins, he being confined to it like a horse to a pen.

"What's that you, Fitzjohn?" cried J——s. "Is there any truth in the rumour, that you are coming on board here, and as first lieutenant? We heard of a man cutting his throat for the fun of the thing, and taking poison for pastime; but for a man to give up the command of a fine brig for such a floating hell as this *is* a rum taste."

"And a very tempting prospect truly!" replied Fitzjohn.

"Oh, by Jove!" returned J——s, "I hope you *will* come! You'd keep him in order; for he is as great a spooney to a man who dares speak to him, as all tyrants are."

Dinner being now served, put an end to this discourse for the present; and Fitzjohn drank wine all round with the various prisoners, who, confined to their cabins, by order of the good-natured captain, that "did all in his power to make his officers comfortable," now looked like so many dogs chained up, and eating their bones in kennel, the doors of each being kept wide open to promote the "feast of reason and the flow of soul."

The second lieutenant was under an arrest because both quarter-boats did not reach the davits at the same moment, he being commanding officer at the time. The master was under an arrest because the soundings had slipped off the deep sea-lead, in hauling it on board, after using it off the entrance of Cork Harbour. The lieutenant of marines was under an arrest because the four sentinels had not fired their sunset salute at the same moment, they being placed at four distant and different posts. The purser was under an arrest, nominally, for serving out to the middies half allowance of spirits before the swipes were finished—but *really*, because he would not let the captain's steward's wife have a ship's gallon to carry on shore. These officers had determined not to be released without a court-martial, and the two other lieutenants had decided going into the sick list the first time that Sir Jemmy swore at them, after the Platony had got to sea.

Before the dinner was finished, a midshipman came running breathlessly down, and announced, "The captain's coming aboard, gentlemen." Every soul not under arrest, flew up to receive him, excepting Fitzjohn, who took his station under the half-deck.

As soon as the sergeant's guard had finished their usual

salute, Gentleman Jack heard Sir James begin with "Dom it, Mr. Falcon, why the h—ll isn't the water all on board?"

Falcon explained that the lighter came alongside just as the ship's company were going to dinner.

"Dom'em, sir, and you too," replied Sir James. "I wish the iron hoops had been crammed down their dom'd throats; ye'd better leave the Platony as soon as you can. There's a nice weel-spoken young officer *wants to be my first lieutenant*; and as no man can be mair unfit for your office than yourself, you'd better go bock to the signal-station as fast as possible; you're only fit for that."

"I wish I were there, with all my heart," said Falcon; "and I'm only sorry I ever left it."

"Dom ye, sir, don't be insolent to me, or I'll put ye under an arrest, and brak ye by court-martial, sir."

"If you do put me under an arrest, sir," said Falcon, "I beg respectfully to state, that I shall insist upon my trial."

"Send my barge, sir, this instant," said Sir Jemmy, stamping his foot on the deck with rage; "and bring me on board the young fellow that commands yon brig,—I'll ship him in your place this vera day."

"You have no occasion to send so far for him," said Falcon, "he is now on board and down in the gun-room. He is an old friend of mine and J——s, and we've been trying to persuade him to join."

"Weel, sir, what does he say?"

"He said he'd consider of it, Sir James."

Here Sir James took a turn upon the quarter-deck, while Fitz had time to reflect on this pretty piece of public dialogue.

Added to this man's violent temper, he was a complete bully, and not a seaman; but his brother having, as Sir James acknowledged to Fitzjohn, the command of two boroughs, always procured him the command of the finest ships, and the choice of the finest stations; so that he used to boast that few but himself could lose a ship upon a *weather shore*, of which he had already given his countrymen two specimens. He was at this moment going in command of a small squadron upon a sure conquest, which would be easily made, and richly turn to his account in medals, prize-money, orders, &c.

While Fitz was ruminating on what he had heard, the

captain's steward came to him with "Sir James Domn'em's compliments, and hopes Mr. Fitzjohn will favour him with his company at dinner to-day."

Fitzjohn, who had walked down into J——'s cabin, where there was a marine sentinel at the cabin-door, replied for answer, "Make my compliments to Sir James, and tell him I have just dined with my old schoolfellow, Lieutenant J——s, in his cabin."

In a few minutes the steward returned.

"Sir James's compliments, and requests you will come and take some wine with him, as he wishes to speak to you before you leave the ship."

This second invite Fitzjohn accepted, by saying that he would wait on the captain after dinner.

An hour having elapsed, the steward returned, saying, "Sir James has finished his dinner, sir, and will be glad of your company."

By this time Fitzjohn had fully reflected upon the various advantages and disadvantages of the proposed exchange. "If I remain where I am," thought Fitzjohn, "there's little hope of promotion; gun-brigs are not considered the most respectable commands, and it's a sort of lay-on-the-shelf work, after all, is the taking convoys from Ireland to England and back. It makes a man a sort of would-be skipper, without any real solid advantages. But then I am my own master—can go on shore when I like,—come on board, turn out when I like, and turn in when I like, and no one dare censure or say a word to me. On the other hand, the pursering is the devil! If I become first lieutenant of the *Platony*, I am likely to get into immediate active service, with a man of interest, of whom I need not be afraid, as I know my duty, and he cannot show it me; against this I must consider that the part of being '*dommed*' on the quarter-deck without daring to resent it, will, I fear, lose me my commission, and perhaps my life, for my temper will never tamely brook such an insult. Well, at any rate, there can be no harm in hearing what he has got to say,"—and in this middle course, Fitzjohn went direct to the cabin.

He found at the captain's table, Sir James, his clerk, and a midshipman!—"What dinner-company for a post-captain in his own frigate!" thought he.

The first salutation from Sir James was that of a squeeze, accompanied by a pull of the hand that had nearly unshipped his wrist-bone.

"Set ye down, sir, — set ye down, my gude fellow," said he.

"Dom'd familiar," thought Fitz; "too much so to last long."

"Weel, sir, so ye have been dining with that mutineer, J——s?"

"Yes, sir, he's not only an old messmate, but an old schoolfellow too."

"I hope you haven't imbibed any of his mutinous spirit; I shall hang him as soon as we get to Jamaiky."

As Fitzjohn was determined not to spare Sir James Domm'em from receiving the full benefit of his most free opinion, he waited until the *two* who might be witnesses, the clerk and middy, were departed. He had not to wait long, for Sir James having told the clerk to make out the weekly account, that he might take it on shore with him, and informed the reefer that he might make sail, as he had had wine enough, Fitzjohn and Sir James were left alone.

"Weel, Mr. Fitzjohn," said Sir James, filling our hero's glass till it run over, "have ye made up your mind about the exchange with *my* first leaftenant,—I suppose ye ken all that is necessary about the ship and mysel?"

"Why, Sir James," replied Fitzjohn, "upon an occasion of this kind, it's necessary clearly to understand each other, particularly as I find so many of your officers under an arrest after your having been only four days at sea. Without, therefore, entering into who said this, or who told me the other, during the few hours I have been on board the *Platony*, I must candidly inform you that I have discovered she is no man-of-war either in discipline or efficiency. Your officers are discontented, and your ship's company are doing their best to desert you: so that if we were to fall in with an American frigate of our own force the crew would prefer being captured and joining that nation against their natural and mother country to getting a victory, and the honour that awaits it."

"Gracious goodness, man alive; why, dom them then altogether," broke in the captain.

"Excuse me, Sir James," resumed Fitz, "and allow me to go on without interruption or offence, for I assure you I mean none—I only think it better that we should fully understand each other before I accept your kind offer. As for understanding my duty, and doing it, the more rigidly you exact it the more I shall be pleased; but there is one habit you have unfortunately contracted that I never can or will endure. I left the finest ship, commanded by the best seaman and the most rising officer in the British navy" (Bellow), "because, when I was only an humble midddy, he swore at me on his quarter-deck, and in presence of his officers and ship's company; and but now, whilst standing under the half-deck of the Platony, as you came on board, I heard you similarly commit yourself towards your own second in command, my much-esteemed and long-known friend, Falcon. Your interest, it is true, might be of great service to me; the fine frigate you command is fit to cope with anything that ever swam on one deck, added to which, from the influence of your brother's two boroughs, I hear that you are allowed to bear forty supernumerary able seamen, the only part of a frigate's complement in which our ships are deficient; added to all which, the brilliant expedition you are to command with such gallant officers under you, ensures you success, and my promotion would be certain. But, Sir James Domm'em, if you use any ungentlemanly language to me on the quarter-deck, which you would not do if we were ashore as two private gentlemen in society, I have made up my mind to resign my commission, dearly as I have earned it, and insist upon your giving me that satisfaction you could not dare to refuse if on shore.

"On pledging me your sacred word of honour as an officer and a gentleman so to do, and releasing your officers from arrest the day I join the Platony, I will accept the exchange you have in contemplation, and to which Falcon will not object."

"Agreed, agreed, young man," said he, "and I like your spirit. But remember I *will* always be captain of my own ship—*dom me* if I don't! But let me assure ye, ye're mistaken if ye think my ship's company don't like me,—they prefer me to any captain in the navy, and I'd trust 'em anywhere."

'Then, Sir James," said Fitzjohn, "we understand each

other; and if you will say in the presence of any friend of mine as much as you have just said to me; or if you will write to me to the effect that you will not take advantage of martial law, in case of your infringing your promise, Falcon and myself will mutually write to the commander-in-chief. For as to trying a captain by a court-martial, particularly when he has a brother who returns two members, it would be madness; therefore my only safety is in a written promise."

When Fitzjohn returned to the gun-room all the mess got around him, and the servants being excluded, he, in answer to their eager inquiries, explained to them what had passed. At this they were delighted, assuring him that the calling-out clause would never be put to the test, as it only wanted a man of firmness to keep Sir Jemmy in his place, when all would go well.

At this instant, Sir James's servant came down, requesting Fitzjohn would give Sir James a passage on shore in his boat. This request being of course granted, while these two were rowing on shore, Sir James told our hero that "his *dom—d*, rascally crew could na be trusted in a boat; so he had just taken the advantage of his going to take a passage."

"Well," thought Fitzjohn to himself, "this is a pretty proof that *your men prefer you to 'any captain in the navy.'*"

On the ensuing morning, Fitzjohn repaired on board the frigate, and received a note from Sir James Domm'em respecting the promise he made Fitzjohn in his own cabin the evening before. Fitzjohn and Falcon then went below and wrote mutual applications to the Admiralty for an exchange.

In order to allow time for an answer to be received to these, Sir Jemmy obtained the admiral's leave, as an especial favour, to detain the convoy two days longer than had been intended. The answer accordingly came down from London by the expected post, in which my lords of the Admiralty declared that they should have been happy to accommodate the wishes of the parties, but that they required the services of Lieutenant Fitzjohn in a different quarter.

This answer produced much surprise; even Fitzjohn himself was somewhat puzzled, as it was generally thought

in those days that one lieutenant would serve the Admiralty's turn as well as another.

Under these circumstances, all that was left for him was to indulge in his own wonderment, and take leave of those friends whom their unhappy fates still confided to the tender mercies of Sir Jemmy Domm'em. A week after the sailing of the latter he was ordered back to his old station on the English Channel, and the enigma of his required services was explained.

The immortal Nelson, who then commanded the British fleet off Cadiz, being quite exhausted with constantly cruising off and on, watching in vain the motions of the combined fleets in that Spanish bay, at last proposed to the British government to allow him three thousand British seamen and marines, besides the complements of his own ships, to storm the batteries ashore, under the command of one whose name alone was a host—Sir Sidney Smith, who had chosen to support him, at the head of one wing the gallant Commander Lord Cochrane, and at the head of the other Sir William Hoste, while Fitzjohn was to be attached to Sir Sydney's personal staff in his own barge—Nelson intending, at the same time, to sail in with his fleet in three divisions, and attack the enemy at anchor.

This scheme coming to the knowledge of Admiral Ville-neuve, who commanded the combined fleet in that bay, and was well aware of the strong attachment of many of the inhabitants to the British nation, he decided to put to sea without further orders, which the crowning conquest of Trafalgar rendered equally futile and unnecessary.

Though Fitzjohn could not help rejoicing with his countrymen at that great triumph, which is so imperishable a monument to the prowess of Great Britain, and more especially with his own profession, which once more at Trafalgar proved the only human salvation of our freedom, still he could not help regretting that so splendid a victory had not been won by that proposed attack by sea and land, which would have enabled him to have obtained so agreeable a share of its honours. Determined, however, in his own mind, like the gallant Sidney, to make or find these somewhere, he once more turned his attention to the duties before him.

A plan had been submitted to our government by some very cunning gentleman, of blowing up ships and vessels by a sort of sub-aqueous infernal machine; clever, no doubt, but ill according with the candid and chivalrous spirit of warfare which will ever, I hope, distinguish the progress of our arms.

The plan to which I allude, was that of the exploding coffers; and Mr. Pitt being then prime minister, was very anxious to witness, in person, the effects produced. Fitzjohn having been appointed a sort of naval attendant to the "heaven-born statesman," who afterwards so unfortunately died of—but no matter what—this gentleman, on the day appointed for the experiment, came on board the *Xantippe*, then in Walmer Roads.

An old brig, of about one hundred and sixty tons, having been moored head and stern one calm afternoon, two coffers, each of some nine feet in length, well charged with gunpowder and flint-stones, and made fast to each other by about three fathoms of strong hawser, were about three or four feet below the surface of the water; so that the centre of the hawser coming athwart the brig's cable, the current carried one coffer on each side the keel, and under the bilge of the brig, abreast of her mainmast. The interiors of these coffers being perfectly water-tight, were so arranged that they went off by pulling the trigger of a sort of clockwork pistol, which was effected by pulling out a skewer of iron with a line reaching to the surface of the water.

The clocks were set for the explosion to take place in five minutes from the time; the skewer was withdrawn: one of the coffers went off a minute before the other, and, as far as could be perceived, the first explosion blew all the masts into the air, and at the second, down she went; so that by these terrific means a line-of-battle ship might have been annihilated; but for the difficulty of putting the salt on the bird's-tail, or, in other words, placing the coffers, a whole fleet might be easily destroyed. When the sunken brig was weighed by two dockyard lighters, the hole in her bottom was found to be nineteen feet long; while, in addition, several feet of her main keel were gone.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

INTELLIGENCE having been received by the government, that Bonaparte intended to carry off, *vi et armis*, Fitzjohn's old commodore, Sir Sidney Smith, who was enjoying himself whilst on half-pay at his cottage under the cliff at Dover, they advised him either to remove from the coast, or accept an offer which they very kindly made him, of a small vessel to cruise off that station, and prevent such a surprise. This vessel was the *Xantippe*, in the appointment of which little craft to so agreeable a post, Fitz thought that his usual good fortune attended him.

Happening to snatch up a newspaper one day, when on shore for a few minutes, the following paragraph met his eye:—

“Notwithstanding the expense the English nation are burdened with, in keeping a man-of-war brig solely employed to prevent the gallant commodore, Sir Sidney Smith, from being taken by surprise and carried back to his old apartments in the Temple, our Dover correspondent informs us, that the attempt was made last night, and would have been crowned with success, had it not been for the vigilance of the commodore's personal servants.”

On reading this untrue and galling notice, our hero's blood rose to boiling point, and he immediately addressed the following *temperate* letter to the editor:—

“Mr. Editor,—Having read in your paper of yesterday, the infamous and lying statement of a privateer having nearly succeeded in carrying off a gallant officer, for whose safety his majesty's brig *Xantippe*, under my command, has been stationed off Dover, I hasten to inform you, that if you do not immediately contradict this base falsehood, I shall immediately repair to your office, with a pair of new boots on, and you may easily guess for what purpose.”—Signed, FITZJOHN.

The return of post brought to Fitzjohn a copy of the paper in question for that evening, in which was inserted the following admirable reply:—“To save the captain of the *Xantippe* brig the trouble of coming to London and putting himself to the expense of purchasing a pair of new boots, we insert a letter which we have had the honour of receiv-

ing from him, and are glad that our observations will tend to keep him awake." After which followed Fitzjohn's letter, as above quoted.

Very shortly after the publication of the above, Sir Sidney left his residence by the sea-side, and Fitzjohn's brig was fitted, by way of experiment, with a sixty-eight pound carronade, mounted at the bottom of the hold as a mortar, to carry a seven and a-half inch shell.

While thus employed, an awkward affair happened one day, which nearly put an end, not only to Fitzjohn and his troubles in this world, but his brig to the boot of them, as well as her crew, and some of our most distinguished naval officers.

A party of noble amateurs having expressed a wish to see how this novel mortar was fitted in the bottom of the brig, Gentleman Jack made his quarter-deck into a kind of tent. Having finished inspecting the mortar, one of the noblemen in question expressed a wish to see the nature and appearance of a shell with the fuse lighted: Fitzjohn, in furtherance of this object, ordered an *unloaded* one to be brought on deck.

In order to prevent the possibility at any time of committing a mistake in so serious a matter, Fitzjohn had given orders that all the shells, as soon as they were filled and loaded for service, should have a distinguishing spot of white paint put on them, about the size of a wafer. The marine artillery sergeant having handed up a shell with a fuse all ready inserted, his officer who superintended the exhibition took it just abaft the mainmast, and in front of the quarter-deck, where were assembled the party in question—a noble earl, one of the chief supporters of the government, one of the junior lords of the Admiralty, a gallant marquis, Lord Keith, Sir Sidney Smith, Sir Charles Hotham, Colonel Smith, Colonel Maxwell, Mr. T. Welsh, the eminent musical composer, his brother, and Fitzjohn.

The shell was in the officer's hand when the fuse was lighted, and was purposely cut to last only fifteen seconds. After the fuse was alight, Fitzjohn, who happened most fortunately to look up at the officer's face, observed it suddenly undergo the most alarming alteration. The eyes opened to their fullest extent, and seemed bursting from their sockets, and his lips, on an instant, turned deadly pale,

became distended wide apart, without the power of speech or contraction. Our hero perceiving that whatever might be the matter, the shell seemed the cause of alarm, at once instinctively looked down upon it, and there, to his horror, while the previously shortened fuse was rapidly burning away, he beheld that fatal mark which indicated the fact of its having been affixed to a loaded shell. The artillery sergeant had evidently committed the mistake in his hurry, and only after the fuse had been lighted, did the officer, by accidentally lifting his thumb, discover the dreadful error.

Often had Fitzjohn been in action with this officer, and knew him to possess the most undaunted courage; but so completely was he paralysed by finding that he held in his hand that which, in every probability, would, in a few seconds, destroy him and all around him, that he could neither let fall the shell, speak, or do anything. Most fortunately, Gentleman Jack's mind was of another species. Quick as thought, he firmly, but instantaneously, snatched the loaded object of terror out of the artillery officer's hands, and threw it over the brig's side.

Scarcely had it sunk four feet, when it burst, and shook the vessel so dreadfully, that every one imagined her side to be blown in. No damage, however, appeared to have been done, and Fitzjohn had the satisfaction of knowing that by this act of decision he had not only saved his majesty's sloop, but the lives of the valuable officers who were gazing on the shell, and a crew of fine devoted fellows who were his men.

CHAPTER XLIX.

It being a very desirable object to destroy the pile batteries which Bonaparte had ordered to be constructed at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and various places on the coast, similar to the well-known Fort Rouge at Calais, and which, from their standing so far into the sea, served to annoy any British cruisers who might be passing within range, Fitzjohn was despatched one murky night to measure the distance between the various piles of which they were built, with the humane intention of putting in some of the Fulton coffer* to blow the said batteries up.

* Fulton, the name of their inventor.

As there was no chance of approaching these little marine forts in a direct line from seaward, owing to the excellent look out kept by the guard, Fitzjohn pulled right in for the main land, which he reached at high water, and letting his boat drift quietly down with the ebbing tide, soon found himself in-shore of, and close to, that battery to the eastward of Boulogne.

On getting alongside the object of his attention, he discovered that it was surrounded with a strong net, so that there was no possibility of introducing the coffers until the netting was cut or removed. As the object of this visit was merely to ascertain, not to act, Gentleman Jack had no sooner satisfied himself, than he ordered all hands to lie down in the boat, that they might not be seen and fired at by the sentinels in his progress back to seaward.

The ebbing tide off that coast setting directly *out* of the bay, the boat had scarcely drifted half-pistol shot without the battery, when the sentinel with his *qui vive?* showed he was not asleep.

No answer being made to his challenge, and he seeing that no oars were pulling, and no one visible, a small boat which was kept at the battery for the purpose of crossing to the main land at high water, came rowing towards Fitzjohn, with two men of the "garde marine" in their foraging caps; they kindly intended to take his boat in tow, supposing she was gone adrift from the Boulogne shore.

As the French soldiers pulled alongside, without fear, they were instantly secured, and with as little noise as possible, thrust down into the bottom of our hero's boat, with a caution to hold their tongues if they valued life. Fitzjohn and his coxswain now jumped into the two-oared boat, and begun towing his own to the battery. When he arrived at the small staircase, by which ascent is gained to the platform above, and which is therefore placed in the rear of the battery, but only descending half way down with a rope-ladder attached to it, to reach the water, the usual demand of "*qui vive?*" was made.

To this Fitz replied, "*aidez-nous,*" and down came two other men, who were soon secured in the man-of-war's boat.

In doing this, however, the alarm was taken aloft, and away went the rope-ladder, leaving our hero below without the slightest possibility of ascent. Fitz, who had deter-

mined to try whether he could not push his good fortune so far as to gain possession of the battery, and turn its guns on the town, now perceived that the chances on his side of the game were over, and that his wisest plan would be to pocket his winnings, and be off, without throwing away the valuable lives of his men to no purpose. Shoving off from the battery, therefore, with all expedition, and pulling direct for his brig, he placed the prisoners on and around the stern-sheets, so that they sheltered from the fire of their friends the person of their enemies—a plan so admirably answering its purpose, that the fort, by keeping up a heavy fire of musketry, killed one and wounded two of the prisoners, while Fitzjohn and his men escaped unhurt.

As soon as the pile battery could get their large guns ready, they played away with these also; and this set the batteries along the coast firing.

But the most valuable part of the capture was not discovered until next morning, when one of the wounded men proved to be the orderly sergeant of the general, who had been sent to inspect the “materiel,” as the French term it, of their works along the coast. In the pocket of this man was found a rough statement of the force of all the batteries, the repairs they required, and the number of men to garrison each. The sergeant being a German and an old soldier, the Admiralty, on his recovery from a severe wound, attached him, very wisely, to the British service on the Channel station, with the rank and pay of a sergeant of marines, and a most useful and intelligent man he was always found to be.

Some short time after the successful issue of this night’s adventure, as Fitzjohn was standing in towards the English coast, to get into the Downs early in the morning, the weather being thick and a strong breeze blowing, the brig struck upon the outside ledge of the Goodwin Sands.

Finding it impossible to back her off into the deep water, and the breeze increasing with the flowing tide, it became a great object with Fitzjohn to prevent the sea breaking into the vessel. As much sail was therefore set as would keep her well careened and her bottom exposed to the sea, yet not so much as would endanger the masts. The water was then started and pumped up, the shot thrown over-

board, and now and then one of the guns, when opportunity so offered, that the vessel could not return and strike upon them.

From the fact of the afterpart of the brig drawing two feet more water than the forepart, she whirled round upon her heel, so as to oblige the crew to keep bracing the yards about as if she was in stays, and in this way, in the course of three hours, had beaten completely over the Goodwin Sands into deep water again; having, however, lost her rudder and made a great deal of water.

At this juncture two large Deal boats came off to take away the crew, but Fitz refused to quit his vessel, giving them, instead, a hawser, from each quarter, by which they steered her alongside Broadstairs Pier, where she sunk at high tide; when she came to lie high and dry at low water, there appeared so large a hole through her forefoot that a boatswain's bucket used to be lowered through it, to get sand up to scour the decks.

Lord Keith, on hearing the particulars of the affair, was so much pleased with Fitzjohn's resolution in not abandoning his vessel, but ultimately saving her, that he invited him to remain at his house on the cliff until the Admiralty had sent a lighter from Sheerness Dockyard to take her in safety to that port.

On the arrival of the brig at Sheerness, it was found that she required so much repair, that Fitzjohn accepted the command of a hired cutter, attached to the division of the Russian army, then in operation on the southern shores of the Baltic against the French troops.

Having proceeded by land to Copenhagen, he passed the neighbourhood of the Rendsburg Canal, which communicates between the Baltic and the North Sea, at the head of the river Ems.

Always alive to making the most of the present moment, Fitzjohn took the precaution of measuring the length and breadth of the locks on this canal, in the event of his ever wanting to use them.

He next found that the cutter which was to have carried him to Memel having got on shore in the Cattegat, he should be detained some time at Copenhagen for repairs. He therefore took this opportunity of getting a plan of the famous Craven batteries which so annoyed the fleet under

Lord Nelson, and which defend the entrance to their dock-yard and arsenal. As, in order to make this plan complete, it was necessary to know the exact depth of water between these crown batteries and the main land, Fitzjohn, under pretence of fishing, put a hook and bait on every half-fathom of his line; and thus taking his soundings with the greatest accuracy, ascertained the exact depth of water on every point.

As soon as the cutter was repaired he hastened to Memel, where the Prussian court were residing, in their misfortunes having been driven from Berlin by the French armies. The reception afforded to all English officers by that amiable family, as well in power as in adversity, is too well known to need re-assertion. At all hours and seasons the welcome with which our hero met was the same, and of the most gratifying kind. Still Fitzjohn could not help comparing the cold, phlegmatic temperament of the king of Prussia with the warm and energetic disposition of his beautiful queen, the descendant of Maria Theresa.

One day, during the military operations which Fitzjohn then witnessed, the memorable Blucher decided on driving the French from a wood they occupied on the Pomeranian extremity of the Frische Nerung, a long and narrow neck of sand, that runs parallel with the sea-coast, from the opposite side of Pillau.

Fitzjohn accompanied the veteran at the head of five thousand of apparently the finest troops in Europe, being all of the king of Prussia's body-guard. Old Blucher, full of courage and hardiness, used every endeavour to get them into a quick march, but in vain; so that it was not until the evening of the third day that they closed on the French entrenchments.

Such was the extraordinary fear of the French name, that, even when this point had been obtained, and the French troops, not more than seventeen hundred, made a sortie from their works, the Prussians betook themselves to a most precipitate flight, without crossing a bayonet.

Old Blucher, on seeing this, rode over his own men, and beat them with the flat of his sword, in hopes of making them stand, but in vain; and full of shame and disgrace our hero was obliged to return.

Fitzjohn, with not the highest impression of the progress

which Prussian valour had made since the days of the great Frederick, next went down to Dantzic, which was besieged by the French. The Prussian army was then under the command of the brave Kaminskoi; and a squadron of English men-of-war were stationed at the entrance of the Vistula to render them every assistance.

The gallant Captain Strachey having offered his vessel, drawing but little water, to force the passage of the Vistula, and carry up supplies to the besieged in Dantzic, about four miles distant, cast off from her moorings one morning as soon as the wind became favourable; but the river being very narrow, and the wind heading her, she fell to leeward on the left bank of the river; and after a most gallant resistance of several hours against a powerful division of French troops, who fired red-hot shot into her, was obliged to surrender. This proved a most serious loss to the squadron, and our allies more especially, she being laden with supplies for the garrison, who were so reduced in provision as well as in ammunition, that horse-flesh sold for five shillings the pound, and they were obliged to trice up large logs of wood around their walls to let fall on the heads of the besiegers when they attempted to storm them.

In this disastrous position of affairs, Kaminskoi, by way of attempting some diversion, planned a sortie with ten thousand Russian troops, who were collected in the small town and fort of Weixelmunde, situated on the right bank and at the entrance of the Vistula. The object of Kaminskoi's attack was a body of the French, not more than from sixteen to eighteen hundred strong; but who, being barricaded in a strong position, some three miles off, interrupted the sending supplies into Dantzic.

At two o'clock in the morning, Kaminskoi, with his whole force, excepting two hundred men, set out, accompanied by Captain Sir Andrew Pellatt Green, of the British navy, then a lieutenant, commanding a hired cutter on that station, and who volunteered his services.

The French having defended their approaches by three rows of palisades, twelve feet high, and at a distance of twenty feet from each other, opened a destructive fire of grape and cannister. But this did not check the determined bravery of the Russians, who were accompanied to

battle by the priests of their regiments, on horseback, exhorting them to the fight with the strongest arguments afforded by predestinarianism. They accordingly stormed over all obstacles, with the greatest intrepidity; and though they succeeded in getting over the second row of palisades, were repulsed at the third, and returned into the fort, with the loss of more than half the brave fellows Kamin-skoi had led out in the morning.

One battalion, thirteen hundred and fifty strong, returned with only one officer and forty-seven men. One of the priests, observing, during the fight, that a private was lagging astern of his battalion, rode up to him, and beseeching him to do his duty, reminded him, that if he was killed in the battle, he would sup that night with the Lord, in paradise.

The soldier, on hearing this, turned round; and with the utmost simplicity observed, that he had no doubt of the fact; "but the Lord knew he was no supper man;" a reply which soon became known throughout the army.

Amongst the few prisoners brought in, was a very handsome and soldier-like man, a French officer. As soon as the Cossack, who had taken him prisoner, had led him on the bridge of boats, which had been constructed to cross a branch of the Vistula, they threw him down, and began most deliberately to pull off his boots, and then to undress him.

The poor young fellow roared out most lustily for better treatment, and Fitzjohn ran to his assistance; but being dressed in a blue uniform, as were also the French, the Cossacks fancied that he too was a Frenchman; and having deliberately cut off his uniform buttons, which they took to be gold, it was with great difficulty he could explain to them the difference of the two nations. As for the unhappy French officer, despite of all Fitzjohn could say, he was, as soon as he was stripped, tumbled into the river, and drowned. Truly the Russians, from their emperor to their serfs, are the most beastly savages and slaves upon the face of God's earth.

The Cossacks, the next day, evacuated the village; and although the general and his officers used their utmost exertions, their influence was wholly insufficient to prevent them from pillaging the inhabitants, and pulling the

women's earrings from their ears by force, as well as killing the peasants' horses for the sake of gorging what they termed the most delicious morsels,—their eyes!

CHAPTER L.

THE city of Dantzic having surrendered, Gentleman Jack received, with the greatest pleasure, the necessary orders for taking home to England the despatches of General Lord Hutchinson, who was attached to the Russian army, to report to the British government the movements of those precious allies; all of whom were paid with British gold for the very great exertion of defending their own territories.

He now reaped the advantage of his foresight in having measured the locks of the Rendsburg Canal, as the cutter he commanded was just of a size to be inserted into them. Thus avoiding the tedious and circuitous route of the Baltic and Cattegat, he arrived in London on the seventh morning after leaving Pillau, to the utter incredulity of my lords in office, who could in no way comprehend this advance on the age in locomotion.

As soon, therefore, as the despatches which Fitzjohn brought, had been carefully read over by the Secretary of State, a cabinet council was summoned for the next morning, and Fitzjohn ordered to attend. When the council had met, he was summoned to the chamber; and on being interrogated as to the precise day and hour on which he had left Lord Hutchinson's head-quarters at Pillau, an elderly nobleman, who sat at the head of the table, and was the president, said, "Pray, sir, what vessel do you command?"

Fitzjohn replied, "The Betty Frisky—hired cutter."

"Is she a fast-sailing vessel?"—"No, my lord, quite the contrary; I never got more than seven knots out of her."

"Then, young man," said the president, "I would advise you to be more correct in your dates for the future. When did you say you left my Lord Hutchinson?"—"This day week, my lord."

"It is quite impossible! You must have sailed at the rate of twenty-three miles an hour. Is it not so, my Lord

Fish?" addressing himself to the first lord of the Admiralty, who knew just as much about navigation as the noble president himself.

"When I commanded the —th regiment, and was embarked with it in a transport," said the commander-in-chief of that part of our armies likely to be employed in the quarter in question, who was of course one of the council, and who I may designate as General Gunpowder, "we never made more than six miles,—which the sailors call knots—an hour."

This cautious statement was confirmed by Sir Henry Bombshell, the master-general of the Ordnance, and who had also been embarked in a transport in the course of his services.

As the chart of the Cattegat and a pair of compasses were lying on the table, Fitzjohn guessed what had been passing before he was ordered into their presence, and he was about to speak, when Mr. Canning, who was also present, suggested that Fitzjohn should take the compasses and mark out, as nearly as he could, the distances he had run, every day, since his departure from Pillau.

Fitzjohn here asked permission to get his log-book, which he had brought with him, and left in the waiting-room below. This was of course granted to him, and whilst going out of the door, he heard the president say, "I think we have caught him out."

Bombshell muttered something about blowing him from the mouth of an eighteen-inch mortar; Gunpowder thought that as he was only a lieutenant, perhaps tying him to the halberts and setting the drummers to work, might have a beneficial effect; while my Lord Fish swore he would scratch him off the list, beyond a doubt: but Mr. Canning, more reasonable than the others, hinted there were two sides to a question, and that accusation was not proof.

On the return of Fitzjohn with the log-book under his arm, which he very coolly untied, and opened—he read as follows:—"At six A.M., April 16, 1807, hauled the Betty Frisky out from Pillau pier, came to an anchor, and went on shore for Lord Hutchinson's despatches. Received them at eight o'clock; came on board and waited two hours for Lord Walpole, who was ordered a passage home; breeze

springing up from off the land, and his lordship not appearing, made sail at twelve, Pillau bearing W.N.W."

Having read this, Fitzjohn went on to mark out the daily course with a parallel rule and the pair of compasses, which lay on the table. He passed the usual passage towards Copenhagen by Spiel Cliff and Kiøge Bay, and leaving Trindelen Point on the starboard hand——. One of them observed, "Ah, he now goes up the Belt." On our hero, however, passing the Great and Little Belts, and steering towards the entrance of the Rendsburg Canal at Frederickstadt, Bombshell observed, "Ah, ah! he came overland."—"No, my lord," replied Fitzjohn, "I never slept out of the cutter."

"Well, sir, then how did you come."—"Why, my lord, I had the cutter towed through this canal, which they call the Rendsburg, which joins the Baltic Sea to the Eyder River, having taken the precaution of measuring the locks, as I came by it overland, some time before. Having got through the canal and down the river Eyder, I crossed the North Sea, landed at North Yarmouth, and here I am."

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Canning, "you see what it is to condemn without a hearing! Now, my Lord Fish, as you had proposed to scratch him off the list in case he had been wrong, I think in justice you ought to do something for him since he is right."

"Indeed so do I also," said Fish, "and I am sincerely sorry for having for one moment harboured a thought which was not correct."

The president, Gunpowder, and Bombshell, all most heartily joined in Mr. Canning's recommendation; and, like honourable good fellows, as they were, expressed themselves quite grieved for the mistake caused by their ignorance of the existence of the canal in question.

Fitzjohn, on hearing this new turn which the debate had taken, naturally expected that he was about to get his promotion; his surprise therefore may be conceived, when he heard my Lord Fish propose to send him out to the West Indies.

Sooner than allow this to come to pass, our hero begged to say, that he would rather be without his lordship's favour altogether; at which the whole council laughed very heartily; and Canning, in particular, so warmly espoused

his cause, that a widely different appointment was the result.

The success of the French armies in Poland, having called the attention of the British Government to the possibility of Bony taking fancy to the Danish fleet, Fitzjohn had transmitted to the ministry the sketches and plans of the crown batteries, and the sea defences of Copenhagen, which he had so lately taken. Nothing was more natural, therefore, than that he should be employed upon the Danish expedition, on which our cabinet had already resolved. Mr. Canning having mentioned this to the president at the council-board, our hero had accordingly the good fortune to be appointed flag-lieutenant to Sir Jemmy the Good, as he used to be called by the fleet, from the circumstance of his particular attention to his sectarian duties, and who, with as little delay as possible, hoisted his flag on board the three-decker, which I shall call the Prince of Puritans.

The captain of the fleet, who bears rank and duties similar to those of adjutant-general of the army, was at the same council appointed, in the person of his old captain, Topham, which appointment gave him the rank of rear-admiral.

CHAPTER LI.

BEFORE joining his new ship, our hero had the delight of enjoying a few brief days' leave of absence, the which properly to appreciate my readers must experience. If anything could induce one to undervalue the inestimable blessings of freedom, it might be the absence of that inexpressible, though brief happiness, produced by a temporary relaxation of the bonds of slavery.

In the particular case of Fitzjohn, however, there was a very great drawback on his joy, in the melancholy gloom which still continued to hang over the fate of Jim Bell and poor Jane Graves, of whom the most untiring efforts of our hero failed to procure the slightest intelligence, in addition to that already known to him, and which seemed so surely to indicate their sad destiny.

The family of Mrs. Graves had long since gone into mourning for her, and even in the breast of Fitzjohn there

gradually died away the once fervent hope that such a step might have been prematurely taken. After the exhilarating excitement of the first few days of leave had passed away, the feelings of regret and despondency gradually assumed such power over Fitzjohn's spirits, that he voluntarily shortened the period of his well-earned liberty, and taking leave of his kind parent, returned once more to his duties afloat.

The captain of the Puritan was an old Scotch seaman, a curious mixture of sweets and sour, but as kind and good-hearted a being as ever broke biscuit.

Mightily given to swear was he, when Jemmy the Good was *not* upon deck, but when the commander-in-chief was present, he had a very unexceptionable gift of scolding in the true methodistical style.

Amongst the other duties which Fitzjohn had assigned to him, was that of telling old Mac when the commander-in-chief showed his nose, and when he hid the same, as the following example will show.

Whilst double-reefing the maintop-sail one day, the commander-in-chief being below, old Mac was calling out to the men aloft in that most energetic, but I must add ungentlemanlike style, at that time common in the navy,—"You d—d infernal scoundrels, will you bear a hand, or must I cut the rascally livers out of every one of you? You blackguards! if that sail isn't well reefed in two minutes and a half, I'll—" Here Fitz, seeing Sir Jemmy the Good make his appearance, pulled old Mac by the sleeve, and whispered, "Admiral is on deck, sir."

Powers of civility! what a change came over Mac's dream! The rigid muscles which anger had so lately called into full play, smoothed away like the quick subsiding foam of spirit—nor did his language become less altered. "Come, my good fellows," said old Mac, "be quick and reef the maintop-sail, do now; but don't hurry in from the yard-arms, lest any of you fall overboard." Here the commander-in-chief, thinking that there was more wind blowing than would do him good, dived below once more.

"Admiral gone below, sir," said Fitzjohn, ever watchful. No sooner did old Mac hear the joyful news, than he burst forth with his peculiar eloquence once more.—"O you

d—d scowbanking lubbers, why the devil don't you move your lazy limbs! May I never move hand or foot again if I don't flog the last man in from each yard-arm!" And such, or similar to this, was the pantomime almost daily acted on board the Puritan in fifty different ways. Mac was to have a frigate, if himself and the admiral jogged on well; and though he had serious faults—impediments of speech, as it were—still poor Mac richly deserved his ship from his long and faithful services.

But a still more marked instance of Sir Jemmy's influence on his inferiors soon occurred. One fine evening, when sailing up the Cattegat, the seamen were singing sea-songs together on the fore-castle. Jemmy coming up and hearing some good staves, as the sailors call it, summoned Fitzjohn to him, and desired our hero to write down the names of those men who sung so well. Fitzjohn having done this, though perfectly ignorant of the end in view, gave the said names to Mac the next morning.

Captain Mac, all curiosity, hurried into the great cabin, and presented them to the commander-in-chief. In a few minutes out he comes, with his face as red as blood, his cheeks distended with rage, his eyes starting out of his head, and his heart and tongue equally devoted to swearing like a trooper.

"What is the matter, sir?" said Fitzjohn.—"Matter!" replied Mac; "enough, by Jove, to breed a mutiny! To think of sending those fore-castle-men, because they have good voices, down into the boatswain's store-room to practise psalm-singing!! Why the devil did you give Jemmy all these names?"

"I was obliged to do as I was ordered, sir," said Fitzjohn.

"By Jove!" returned Mac, "what will the service come to next? However, I suppose it must be done! Here, Fitzjohn, go and get these men aft on the quarter-deck;" and poor Mac went muttering and cursing, and at every three words using the term, "*psalm-singing*."

Fitzjohn now gave the list to the first lieutenant, a worthy man and an excellent good officer, who knew his duty to a peg, and did it, so that he could defy the most fastidious or tiresome martinet to say a word against him. The first lieutenant handed it to the boatswain, who, knowing the object of the muster, went to the fore-hatchway,

and with his usual call of attention, bellowed forth, "I say, turn up here, you singing warmint, Bill Jones, Tom Rattlin, Jack Hatchway, Bob Brown, and the rest o' ye; turn up, I say, and put your pipes in order to larn psalm-singing. Pretty pass the sarvice is a coming to at last! When I was a boy at sea, our skipper wouldn't have so much as a parson on board of us for all the world! We never had no luck with them ere black'uns aboard! O L—d, O L—d, wot would old Benbow say if he was but to ris again?"

The singing men being mustered to the number of some five-and-twenty on the quarter-deck, one and all refused this new duty, declaring that they did not come to sea to sing psalms; and if the matter had been pushed much further, it would in all probability have caused a mutiny in the ship, which might have spread throughout the fleet. Even as it was, this injudicious effort at compelling that which should be the sacred offering of the heart, was attended by results sufficiently mortifying; for from that time, none of the merry songs which used to be echoed on the forecastle, were ever heard in the Puritan again, and this, almost the only innocent source of enjoyment and solace to the wooden-caged seamen, was completely annihilated.

The fleet at last arrived at their destination, and anchored abreast a beautiful bay, six miles below the city of Copenhagen, where it was evident the landing of the troops would take place, but the Danes, after enjoying eighty years of peace, had neglected to make the necessary preparation to oppose the landing of our forces, although they were lying at anchor several days before the embarkation took place.

Sir William Congreve, or Sky-rocket Jack, as he was nick-named by the sailors, arrived soon after the fleet, in a Berwick smack, which had been hired for the purpose of conveying himself and his rockets to the siege of Copenhagen. Fitzjohn, during his former stay at this city, whilst the cutter underwent repair, having formed some little penchant for a damsel who resided in a small village four miles from the city, was obliged, in his transits thither, frequently to cross the second ditch which surrounded Copenhagen; no one, therefore, knew better than himself the exact pilotage for the place, both in and out, in daylight and in darkness; so that when a council of war was called to

debate the mode in which the siege should be conducted, Fitzjohn was enabled to throw considerable light on the subject, and to speak with great certainty.

Instead of a drawbridge, as there ought to have been over the second moat, to render the defence of the city complete, the confiding Danes had filled up a part of the ditch in question, so that it was passed by a broad and well-paved causeway. As there was a small churchyard in advance of this causeway, between the first and second ditch, whence Copenhagen was reported to be within range of the Congreve rockets, every exertion was made to get a battery completed in this spot, its proximity to the city being such as to compel the seamen to work in a stooping position.

On the second night of this operation the word was passed that the Danish gun-boats were approaching, and as the battery was not far from the water's edge, a general alarm was given, and the seamen stood with their pikes ready to oppose the expected landing and attack. This, however, turned out to be a little in the fudge line, since the only foe was composed of two fishing boats, which had landed previously to starting on their morning's occupation. This diversion being over, the battery was completed that night, and the rockets soon set the city on fire in the desired direction, as Sky-rocket Jack said, "in a most gratifying manner."

The details of the siege and the subsequent capture of the city, together with the beautifully appointed fleet, are too well known for me to trouble my reader with the unnecessary minutiae, still it may be safely said that had the Danes not have built a causeway across the second ditch with which that city is surrounded, but rather defended it, as persons skilled in war would have done, the English army would have been detained before the place so late in the season, that their ultimate success, for at least that year, would have been very doubtful.

CHAPTER LII.

THE city of Copenhagen having at length surrendered, Sir High Topham despatched our hero to the shore on the ho-

nourable but dangerous mission of receiving the keys. The dockyard was divided from the city by a floating foot-bridge; and when the capitulation had been decided a division of the Guards received orders to take possession of the dockyard. When Fitzjohn arrived on shore some of these were marching over the bridge into the yard as the Danish soldiers were marching out, so that they met on the centre of the bridge itself, and angry feelings began to show themselves on each side, rapidly verging to open hostilities.

As soon as Gentleman Jack saw this he remembered that the bridge opened in the centre, and was only kept closed by ropes. Stooping down, with a sharp knife he speedily cut these, and the parts of the bridge separating, he thus quietly put asunder the would-be combatant parties.

Having now to turn his attention to the main object of his mission, the receiving of the keys and bringing them on board to the commanders-in-chief, Lord Cathcart and Lord Gambier, who were assembled on board the flag ship, he observed a number of persons on the parapets of the houses of the streets through which he had to pass to get to the governor's.

Not seeing the absolute necessity of his receiving on his crown all the tiles in the place, Fitzjohn prudently sent to the officer on duty at the entrance of the city near the landing-place, for a guard to see him quietly up amidst the enraged population. This being granted, he placed himself in the middle of them, and thus executed his orders and returned on board with safety.

For this and the previous services of our hero the next despatches from home contained the joyful news of his promotion to the rank of commander, and on the day after his receipt of this welcome intelligence, he was appointed to one of the Danish men-of-war which had been turned into a hospital ship, and returning to Yarmouth Roads, arrived on the same day with a Swedish frigate, which had on board Louis XVIII., the late king of France, who had escaped to England under the name of Count de Lille.

Fitzjohn being the junior commander of the fleet, the port-admiral sent him on board the Swedish frigate to request that the Count de Lille would name the hour most agreeable for the reception of the port-admiral, who pro-

posed to do himself the honour of accompanying the count to the shore.

Gentleman Jack having been delayed on this mission some time longer than he had expected, found himself, on his return to the flag ship, too late for the general breakfast. On announcing the cause of his delay to have arisen from his waiting on the *King of France*, the explanation was received with a general burst of laughter by his many companions. "King of what, Fitzjohn?" said they; "you will never see him king of France again, rely on it."

At that period of the war, 1807, the Emperor Napoleon was in the plenitude of his glory; the greatest sceptic therefore may be forgiven for not then foreseeing the possibility that seven short years, aided by the misdirected prowess of British troops, could place that identical exile on an hereditary throne, which none of his family have either the virtue to deserve, or the ability to retain.

At this moment, the signal midshipman came down to announce the appearance of the Danish prizes to seaward, and all hands went on deck to watch their coming in. The *King of France* seeking protection of England and lying in North Yarmouth Roads, and the captured Danish fleet at the same time beating in, presented itself to the minds of all present as a concurrence of singular events, the parallel of which they could scarcely expect in life to meet again.

CHAPTER LIII.

FITZJOHN was now for the first time fairly laid on the shelf as a half-pay officer. At first the change had naturally its charm, but this soon wore away, and with that impatient restlessness of spirit which is so peculiarly engendered by a sea life, he longed for active employment once more.

Perhaps this desire was the more strongly urgent within him from the constant tendency of his thoughts to wander on the fate of the Hoogly, and those dear friends who with her had so mysteriously disappeared. Once again the impression that she could not have been utterly lost, was forced upon his mind by that ardent hope, which alone supports existence under the innumerable misfortunes that await the young: with this feeling he went down to the

humble parsonage of Jane's father. Here he found her affectionate and amiable family in deep mourning, and so convinced of the futility of the doubts which it was his wish to entertain, that he at last became a convert to their more calm view of the question, and returned to town with the determination of losing, if possible, in the activity of service, that "bitter remembrance" which quiet and leisure only served to prolong,

Having once arrived at this decision, our hero forthwith made application at head-quarters for the command of a sloop, which application, however, could not, he was told, meet with the desired attention for at least some weeks. During this interval, then, Gentleman Jack resolved to turn his attention to a part of the naval profession then but little known on board a man-of-war, namely, the management of a boat either under sail, or in beaching or launching her in bad weather.

Having previously ascertained at head-quarters that he might safely venture on such a step, our hero went down to Deal, and renewed an old acquaintance with a notorious smuggler, whose boat he had once taken and released. The name of this worthy was Josh Mochat. He was a tall athletic man, full six feet high, and extremely bony, having dark black eyebrows, large hazel eyes, bronzed countenance, and the most determined aspect that can be imagined, no doubt, acquired, in part, it may fairly be supposed, from the habits of his profession, in which he had been brought up from his earliest infancy.

Josh was every inch of him a thorough-bred seaman. His crew consisted of sixteen persons, who had the most perfect reliance on him.

One dark, tempestuous night, that many a stout heart might have quaked to encounter, this Will Watch of reality, put out to sea from the French port of Dunkirk. As the gale increased and she laboured much, whilst scudding, a party of five men sat around and upon the stern frame, forming a wash-board with their backs, on which the angry waters broke, and then harmlessly rolled off again, being thus effectually prevented from breaking into the boat.

The helm during this momentous time remained in the hands of Josh himself, Fitzjohn and the remainder of the

crew being seated upon the kegs as low down in the bottom of the boat as possible.

The sea continuing to increase with the wind, Josh ordered the break-water raft to be prepared. As the spirit kegs with which these boats are laden, and this raft is made, are all slung in pairs before they are put on board, it required but a very short time to get ready for use. The break-water raft was composed of two dozen kegs, slung in pairs, and kept together by a small hawser being passed in a serpentine manner through the slings of each pair. At a distance of twenty fathoms from these two dozen, and with the same hawser, three dozen more were secured in the same way. These having all been thrown overboard, and the boat veered to such a distance to leeward of them as was thought proper, she was found to be lightened most considerably, and when within about ten fathoms of the hawser's end, an opportunity of a smoother sea was watched by the helmsman, the foresail lowered down, and a very small mizen hoisted in its place to keep her to the wind.

This excellent manœuvre, Fitz watched with great attention, as he saw how useful in some extremity the knowledge of it might prove to himself. The outer raft of kegs received and broke the high waves, and the second raft so completely seconded the work of pacification, that the boat rode in comparatively smooth water. The kegs being full, floated even with the surface, while their gravity was just sufficient to prevent their being driven against the bow of the boat, which naturally was exposed much more to the action of the wind than themselves, and continued driving to leeward of them. The spritsail jib being ready for hoisting, in case of breaking adrift from the raft, the crew, who felt themselves in perfect safety, prepared to take their rest, with the exception of the helmsman, and two look-outs stationed near the foremast, to guard against the chafing of the hawser, and be in readiness to hoist the jib if required.

At daybreak, our hero found that the boat had drifted close to the outer edge of the Goodwin Sands. Josh, on seeing this, rubbed his eyes and said it was time to look about him. The raft was got on board and the lugger run into the swashway, where, from its being low water, she rode in perfect safety. Towards the dusk of the evening

preparation was made to get under weigh, in answer to a signal from the shore, made by the lighting of a small fire close down on the beach, about three miles to the eastward of Deal.

Josh being thus informed that his people were ready to carry away the cargo, about two A.M., in a drizzling rain and a very heavy surf, he most dexterously beached his lugger, keeping her broadside angularly exposed to the waves; so that although these ran up and along the broadside from the quarter to the bow, not a drop of water came on board.

As soon as the admirably-managed craft touched the shingly beach, a crowd of persons came down, and each taking two pair of kegs, one over each shoulder, the four hundred and eight were all taken away without a word being spoken; out of this large number, some twenty-eight were kindly and most considerately left for the Custom House officers on the beach, a few yards distant from the lugger, that they might not be suspected of neglect of duty—and of which one of the smugglers had given information.

As Gentleman Jack saw this last part of the never-sufficiently-to-be-extolled arrangements of his friend Josh, he lifted up his hands and exclaimed, "O glorious spirit of humbug! from the statesman to the smuggler where does not thy all-pervading influence predominate?"

CHAPTER LIV

HAVING made several trips to and fro across the Channel, our hero conceived himself to be sufficiently perfect in boatmanship to say good-bye to the worshipful company of Josh Mochat, which he accordingly did; Josh, like a good fellow, never having divulged to any who or what he was.

While waiting at Deal the answer to a fresh application to the Admiralty for a command, the *Antelope* brought up in the Downs, commanded by his distinguished and esteemed old commodore, Sir Sidney, with whom, it need not be added, that he had since pursued his acquaintance whenever opportunity offered. Having gone on board to see his old friend, he was asked to take a cruise with him in the

capacity of cabin-passenger and private gentleman. An answer having come from the Admiralty, recommending patience as one of the greatest of virtues, Fitzjohn ordered the necessary traps from town, and set off in the *Antelope* for a cruise in the Channel.

After a few days, the cypher-like position of our gallant commander began to prove wearisome; he longed for a more active part, and the *Antelope* having captured a little privateer in the North Sea, which had formerly been an invasion-boat, Sir Sidney, with great good-nature, complied with the urgent request of Fitzjohn, to be allowed to take a cruise in her, to ascertain her qualities as a sea-boat.

She was armed with three eighteen-pound carronades, and manned with fourteen seamen, one young midshipman having been put into her, that the Admiralty might not be able to complain of a half-pay officer having been entrusted with an active command. In the middle of November, Fitz made sail from the frigate, with a strong breeze from the northward, which increased to a gale during the night. Having laid-to his vessel by the wind, he had her lee-boards lowered down to prevent her making much drift; but so leewardly was the craft, that before dark on the third evening of her departure she was close in with the coast of Holland.

Gentleman Jack now finding it impossible to keep the sea all night, and it being near high water, one of the privateer's carronades was thrown overboard, and sail being set on her she run delightfully through the surf, and so high on the beach, that she was nearly three-quarters of a mile from low-water mark.

This at once proved that she was particularly well-calculated for the object for which she had been originally built, viz. manfully to take the beach in any weather; for in such case most vessels would have been wrecked, and their crews drowned.

Before daylight, an anchor with a very long range of hawser was carried out ready to heave her off at high water, when the weather should moderate. The fishing-nets, which were found on board her, were hoisted up to dry, the carronades were covered with seamen's jackets, and never more than three persons allowed to be on deck at the same time.

All these precautions were taken in order to make the sentinels on shore mistake the privateer for a Dutch fishing vessel, which had been obliged to run ashore from the violence of the wind and sea. This sagacious plan went on well during the first day, but in the middle of the second night the two coast *gens d'armes* patrols came down to the vessel, and making their horses' bridles fast to her bowsprit shroud, came on board.

After having a glass of rum, some tobacco, and a confab in darkness, and bad French, for an hour about nothing, they went away. As all lights had been put out to prevent their seeing anything below, Fitz hoped that they had not found out the true character of his vessel; but on getting over the side, one of the Frenchmen stumbled, and laid hold of the jacket which covered a gun, to prevent his falling from the vessel's side to the sand below.

This act uncovered the iron muzzle of the piece, and although the *gen d'armes* took it with a deal of *sang froid*, Fitzjohn was quite satisfied that he had not only seen the gun, but "smelt the rat."

In these suspicions Fitzjohn, much to his chagrin, was quickly and fully borne out, by seeing his two late guests trot off directly they were mounted, in the direction of a fort which he had observed on the top of a hill about two miles distant.

As there was now most clearly nothing left for him to do but prepare for a fight, our hero roused up all his men, and pointed a gun along the hawser, which with its grapnel he had laid out at low water to assist him in heaving off at high tide.

As a matter of course, he had determined to defend himself to the last; and very soon after daylight, he perceived a large body of cavalry forming under the sand-hills, together with a most formidable body of infantry, marching down in co-operation towards him.

Having hove the cable taut, and crammed the carronade full of grape-shot and musket-balls, stationed his men, and attended to one or two other little points, he felt quite content that in the words of his old commodore, Sir Sidney, "the shooting season should commence."

Old Britannia's colours were now laid out ready to hoist, when the battle should begin, for Fitzjohn had resolved not

to be the aggressor. At dead low water, the infantry formed a line on the starboard-side, and the cavalry, two deep, wheeled round under his stern to take him on the starboard-quarter. By this manœuvre Fitzjohn's craft would have presented the novel sight of a vessel quite surrounded by horse and foot.

"Come, come," said Gentleman Jack, "it's time to show you who we are." Up went the colours, bang went the carronade and grape-shot along the line of hawser, down came horses and riders,—over them went the second line of cavalry.

"Give it them again!" cried Fitzjohn, "whilst they are in confusion." A second and third dose was accordingly poured down the throats of these wincing patients, and off they went full trot.

Right-about-face went the infantry, who had been repeatedly noticed by the round shot from the other carronade, and which made their own way through the ranks of the "grades."

"One thousand men marched down the hill and then marched up again," cried Fitz to his followers, encouraging to tickle up the backs of the good folks who are so quick at leaving him in the lurch. The tide flowing in fast, all operations were at an end for the present; but Fitzjohn observed the discomfited enemy very busy preparing some field-pieces for the next morning's amusement.

During the first watch five of the seamen, three of them being Danes, deserted to the enemy; so that the intention Fitzjohn had formed of filling his vessel with sand, and converting her into a battery, was thus rendered almost futile.

Suiting his plans, therefore, to the exigencies of the moment, his only boat was got out, arms and provisions put into her, preparations made for setting fire to the vessel, and putting to sea once more, in hopes of being able to seize some other vessel on the coast, and so get back to England, or rejoin either the *Antelope* or *any other* vessel of the Channel.

At an hour before daylight, everything was ready, the British colours were nailed to the mast-head, and the vessel being set on fire in three places, Fitz and his men embarked in the boat and put to sea. Having laid on their oars at

musket-shot distance from the shore, to see the end of the play they had been acting, their deserted vessel soon became enveloped in flames, so as to be inextinguishable. The beach was covered with troops, who had brought down eight field-pieces, the range of which they exercised on Fitzjohn's boat, but without effect, while the British ensign waved proudly over the fire and smoke, and was burnt with the mast that bore it.

There is something in the heart of a British seaman that makes it intolerable to him to behold his country's colours in the hands of an enemy. Nor can a true patriot's feeling be better shown than in the heartfelt prayer that it may ever so continue.

Having seen the end of their late vessel, Fitz and his men now pulled away. He had at daybreak observed a brig at anchor close under an adjacent island. Fitzjohn, therefore, determined to keep the sea until dark, when he might row in and carry her by boarding.

This he accordingly did, but with some difficulty, from the very leaky state of his boat; but though his prize cost him nothing by resistance, a very heavy battery unmasked its fire upon him; and soon seeing that not a chance was left, he had to surrender at discretion to its commandant, and was next day marched off, with his seven seamen and young middy, to a fortified town fifteen miles inland.

How surely does it happen, thought Fitz, as he trudged along, that a man, however fortunate all his life through, no sooner takes to volunteering than he most inevitably gets into some confounded scrape or another! But cheer up, the enemy has a handful of trumps this time. Win the trick he must; next time it'll be my deal.

CHAPTER LV.

THOUGH our hero, from a long acquaintance with misfortune, found little or no difficulty in reconciling himself to its sufferings, his little companion, a lad of fourteen, was by no means so equably disposed: a great share, therefore, of Fitzjohn's attention was diverted from his own sorrows by his endeavours to console those of his junior officer.

On the arrival of our hero and party at the fortified

town I have mentioned, they underwent a strict examination, and it was soon discovered that Fitzjohn had formerly belonged to the ship of Sir Sidney Smith; and such ~~was~~ the stern estimation in which that officer's services were held, that Fitzjohn was immediately, and, as we know, ~~not~~ very unjustly either, set down as one who had doubtless been instrumental in burning and destroying many of the vessels lost and taken on that coast during the time of the gallant commodore.

The discovery of Fitzjohn's identity did not, as may well be supposed, tend much to mollify the feelings of his captors towards him, and he was told, with a sardonic grin and ironical manner, meant to mortify his feelings and his pride that he and his men would be sent to a prison where there were already some of his countrymen. On hearing this Fitzjohn expressed a hope that, though separated from his crew, he might still be allowed to visit them; to which an equivocal answer was returned, informing him that his crew were already locked up in their cells; he had nothing to do but to march off to his, instead of prating to his betters "You dirt of the earth," cried Fitzjohn, forgetting, in his anger, that to be severe was not always to be just; "your conduct becomes your rascally, thievish nation, which has just pluck and ability sufficient to contend with the English when lying bound in your prisons, and nowhere else."

At this taunt, the French officer of *gens d'armes*, who had been examining Gentleman Jack, grinned his teeth, and laid his hand on his sword. "By G—! if you dare to draw an inch of it, you little, puny wasp," replied Fitzjohn drawing up his tall figure, and shaking his great bony fist in the face of the other, "I'll never move from this place till I've spattered your brains on that wall."

On hearing so ominous a threat, the soldiers who were standing behind, thought him so likely a man to fulfil his words, that four of them springing on him, at once pinioned his arms to his side.

"Bring some irons," cried the insulted officer, foaming at the mouth with rage.

"No, no, monsieur," said one of his men, an old, tall veteran, with a century's mustachios, almost, upon his upper lip; "you can better afford to laugh at his abuse. Are we not Frenchmen? Let us remember he is already

conquered. After all, he is only a sailor." This last assertion was made with a shrug of the shoulders, as much as to say, What can you expect from such creatures?

"Good, then," said the officer, and waving his hand with all the superciliousness of an irritated Gaul, our young friends were hurried off to prison.

As Fitzjohn went through door after door of the gloomy dungeon, in which he was to be immured, his heart, at every barrier that he passed, seemed to sink more deeply in his bosom, as if the icy dampness of the place had power to chill, not the life-blood only, but the very soul.

At last they entered a large, dark, gloomy vault, that, from the groining of its stone roof and massive ribs, bespoke the age of some dozen generations. The only light that illumined this place came through a high, narrow slit; and though all but dark, still the fact of Fitzjohn having passed through other gloomy chambers previous to this, had so far prepared his vision, that he was able to see into the extremity of the place before him, sufficiently to distinguish that there were some inhabitants equally unfortunate with himself, but nothing more. The soldiers who had accompanied him to the very threshold of the dungeon, now thrust himself and middy into it, locked and relocked the door, and then retired.

As Fitzjohn, when obliged to surrender his vessel, had put on his commander's coat and swabs, in order that in his captivity he might have any advantage or privilege belonging to his grade, so still, notwithstanding the rough treatment he had received, the symbols of his rank yet remained upon his shoulders.

Utterly forgetful, however, in his misfortune, of those adventitious advantages on which he had far too much good sense, even in prosperity, to pride himself, our hero walked on towards the other end of the prison to salute his brother captives. One of these he now perceived to be a short, stout man, who was dressed in a monstrosly dirty check shirt, and ragged pair of trowsers, having no coat on, and walking about with his hands thrust into his waistband to keep himself warm.

This is an odd fellow, thought Fitzjohn; but looking at the extreme corner of the dungeon, he there beheld on a pile of straw, some female, as he concluded, the wife of the

other, for over her was laid a seaman's jacket, to protect her from that excessive cold, which nothing but the generosity and devotion of the other could have enabled him thus unjacketed to withstand.

"No," thought Fitzjohn, as he noted these circumstances, "he is not an odd, but a devilish good fellow;" and quickening his steps, he held out his hand, but the other drew back, muttering to himself, "Shiver my timbers if here isn't a riglar-built skipper come amongst us—an out and outer, I knows." Then aloud, "Sorry to see your honour, sir, making your number in this d——d hole. 'Tis an ill wind that blows any craft into such a port as this."

As these words fell on Fitzjohn's ear, a whole host of images and past associations came rushing on his recollection. He felt his limbs involuntarily trembling beneath him. In an agony of doubt and apprehension lest his hopes might have deceived him, he advanced two steps, and in another instant the dirty-shirted, unshaved ragamuffin was clasped in his arms. In him our hero had at last discovered his rough, but ever faithful friend, Jim Bell. As for poor Jim himself, he seemed unable to speak for excess of joy, and Fitzjohn could only exclaim, half choked, "Where, Jim, did you leave *her*—where did you leave *her*?"

Comprehending at once for whom he inquired, Bell pointed to the heap of straw in the corner. Fitz flew to the corner. "Avast! gently," cried Jim; but in tones so hoarse, that they could scarcely be distinguished. Fitzjohn heard nothing—stooping to the ground he gently lifted back the coarse seaman's jacket, and there beheld, pale from long imprisonment, but marked with all the serenity of innocence, the beautiful features of Jane Graves. In the fulness of his heart he sank upon his knees, and lifted his clasped hands; then bursting into a flood of tears, fell insensible beside her.

In the greatest alarm lest the hour that had restored Fitzjohn to him should also for ever have deprived him of his old friend, Jim Bell hastened to raise our hero in his arms, and in so doing he awoke Jane Graves. Though thus abruptly aroused from a deep sleep, there are some subjects, the knowledge of which is so intuitive in a woman's heart, that, wholly unprepared for such an event as Jane

must have been, she comprehended what was passing around in an instant, and almost before Bell had spoken.

And here, perhaps, it was lucky that our hero had been so completely overcome, for in proportion as fainting was a rare thing with Fitzjohn, so it was enduring; and in her efforts to recall her lover back to sensibility, Mrs. Graves's stronger energies were roused, and herself saved from sustaining a similar shock. At last Fitzjohn's breathing grew more perceptible, and as he lay prostrate, and first opened his eyes on those so dear to him on either side, he asked himself what captivity, hardship, suffering, and battle, he would not have undergone for so inestimable a joy!

CHAPTER LVI.

WHEN the feelings of our imprisoned friends had somewhat calmed down, Fitzjohn heard, with indignation and surprise, the treatment they had been made to undergo, and the ample cause that had suppressed all knowledge of their existence from reaching their friends.

The narrative in which all this was embodied, naturally was one of great length and minute detail: but as I will not detain my reader by any unnecessary ordeal of his patience, I may perhaps with advantage condense the peculiar historical accuracy and fulness of Jim Bell into a space more suitable to this crisis of my tale.

My reader will doubtless well remember, that the last news which Fitzjohn had ever been able to obtain of the Hoogly was, that soon after starting from the Cape, under convoy, she was missed, nor ever re-appeared. The long time that had elapsed since that period, had led to the conclusion that she had separated from the convoy, met with bad weather, and gone down. The first part of this conjecture was true; she had, owing to her bad sailing, lagged astern, despite of all Jim Bell's efforts to keep her in good place; and one dark night, when no further from home than off Cape Finisterre, a large French privateer laid the old Indiaman aboard, and carried her: fortunately, before her crew could be got together to offer a resistance, that from the great disparity of numbers must have been ineffectual in every way, except the useless sacrifice of life.

This privateer, which was called, and most aptly, *La Bonne Fortune*, belonged to Rochefort, which port she succeeded in making with her prize. All the prisoners were at once sent off to a prison twenty miles nearer Paris, and for the first two days treated very kindly, Jim Bell and Jane Graves having separate apartments in the commandant's house. Rumours, however, of the lady's large fortune having got to the Frenchman's ears, he began making violent love to her, and ultimately an offer of marriage; all of which she most indignantly refused.

Now then began their troubles; from being exceedingly courteous, the commandant changed his conduct into all that the most pitiful spite and malice could suggest. He intercepted every letter that they endeavoured to send to England—contrived to find sufficient interest to get Mrs. Graves and Bell so completely put under his charge, that they should be moved about whenever his quarters happened to be changed—contrived that every change should be for the worse, and thus at last had dragged them with him into Holland. Here, after aggravating every indignity and suffering, this unmanly creature, who had only retained Bell in his power as a means of working on the fears and feelings of Mrs. Graves, had that morning sent her, in utter despair of her compliance with his wishes, to share the same damp dungeon, and feel the humiliating degradation of having no privacy during any hour of the twenty-four from others of an opposite sex. But knaves and tyrants, in refinement of their cruelty and art, often cheat themselves. The commandant had ordered her from a private apartment to Bell's prison, because he knew that in the course of a few hours it would be shared by two English officers, to prepare for whom he had received previous notice. Imagining, then, that Jane would consent to anything rather than this exposure before strangers, he had sent her word to make her election between such a position, and that of voluntarily becoming his wife.

But much as she had gone through, her spirit remained unimpaired, and she replied that death by any means, however slow was preferable to life with such a monster. Irritated by this message, even cupidity gave way to revenge, and he gave the order for her removal to the horrid place in which Fitzjohn found her; reckless, since

he could not possess her money, what misery he inflicted upon her heart.

Little did he dream that the very last measure of his wrath was one which, under Heaven's kind merey, was to compensate for all the evils he had wrought her. The blood in Fitzjohn's veins burned like fire, as he listened to her recital, and he swore that should he ever meet the villain, oceans of blood should not divide him from meting out the retribution due.

In the meantime, they all agreed that no outward sign must ever escape them before their jailer of having been old friends, or instant separation would be the result—a thing which they now all dreaded as one of the worst calamities that could befall them.

To this determination they rigidly adhered whenever their miserable food was brought to them, or the eye of the turnkey happened to be upon them for any other purpose. At night they were all obliged to sleep upon the damp straw, which was the only kind of bed allowed to them, unanimously selecting, even out of this, the best for poor Jane Graves, whose assertion that she was more happy than she had been for many months before, did, however, somewhat console Fitzjohn for the melancholy and wretched circumstances under which he beheld her. In addition to this effort to render her more comfortable, Gentleman Jack followed Jim's example, and taking off his epauletted coat, laid it over her, as a poor apology for a coverlid.

As it was found utterly impracticable, even with a sailor's ingenuity, to devise any kind of screen, so, whenever this persecuted lady required to change her dress, her three countrymen stood in a sort of circle, with their backs towards her.*

* My French readers of the present day may imagine that this scene is drawn from fiction only. The original of the portrait they will, however, find in "James's Naval History," and I may be permitted to hope, that should either of our nations ever be visited by the scourge of war again, every chivalrous feeling shown in the combat will not be forgotten within the captive's prison walls.

CHAPTER LVII.

IN this state, then, of privation and annoyance, did our friends continue to exist for a fortnight, Fitzjohn insisting and obtaining permission to visit his crew once a day, but in presence of an officer, and only then for half an hour. Orders were at the end of this period received to transport Fitzjohn and his midddy to the fortress of Biche, supposed to be one of the worst of all the prisons in the possession of France for confinement, but the bad weather prevented the change from taking place so soon; and independent of every other stronger feeling, Gentleman Jack looked forward with horror to travelling on foot, escorted by *gens d'armes*, in the month of December, through the cold and clayey soil of the north of France. For a moment, it must be confessed that Fitzjohn's spirits sank as he contemplated the difficulties surrounding himself and friends. With only two English guineas in their pockets, a jailer, rendered doubly ferocious by seven years' confinement in an English prison-ship, and therefore selected for his present office, what reasonable hope of escape could he entertain, even supposing that Jane was equal to a long and painful march in this rigorous season of the year, through Holland and Prussia, a distance of at least twelve days' journey? Still an escape Fitzjohn had determined to attempt, and not alone: for life would have possessed no charms without that companion to whom fortune had so lately and so kindly restored him.

Comforting himself, therefore, with calling to mind Dibdin's beautiful song, "There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft, to look out for the life of poor Jack," Fitz proceeded to hold a council of war with Jim Bell, upon "the ways and means."

In proportion as the ferocity of the jailer had increased, the kindness and attention of the jailer's wife and daughter had, it may be remarked, improved; when the drunken husband was fast asleep, these kind females used to steal into the prison, and bring them part of their dinners, and sometimes a small quantity of spirits, taking poor Mrs. Graves out for a short and temporary walk in the court-yard of the prison.

Fitzjohn now therefore prevailed upon the wife to procure him a map of the country, an old brass horse-pistol, and a pocket-compass, together with a cabin-boy's jacket, trowsers, cap, and Guernsey frock. At last the decisive day arrived, when they received notice, that their march towards the fortress of Biche was to begin the next morning at six o'clock.

As Fitzjohn had strenuously refused all offers of parole, he felt himself quite at liberty to take any step for the escape of himself and companions. As a preliminary step, he requested permission to take a walk round the ramparts for an hour, accompanied by a guard, the day before his departure. This favour was granted him; but he was carefully escorted back to prison at 4 P.M. The two guineas were now diminished to five shillings, by the purchase of the above-mentioned articles; and it was necessary to make a still further sacrifice of two of these, for a bottle of *eau de vie* to regale the jailer.

In the evening he was invited, and by about nine he was quite intoxicated. As he always carried the keys of the three doors through which Fitzjohn and his companions had to pass, hung on a leathern belt around his waist, as soon as he was sufficiently helpless, he was carefully laid down on the ground, in a corner of the dungeon, his hands and legs secured, and a towel held ready to tie over his mouth, while Jim held in his face the brass pistol to frighten him.

Fitzjohn now proceeded with the utmost despatch in his movements. Mrs. Graves stepping out to the jailer's wife, was by her aid made to slip the cabin-boy's attire over her own, which she was enabled to do quickly, from one or two previous trials, leaving with this kind woman whatever she found unnecessary. Meanwhile, our hero, having cautiously unlocked the two first doors, and reclosed but not locking them after him, returned for his companions. The jailer had recovered a little from the effects of the liquor, and was struggling with Jim and the middy; but, with Fitzjohn's assistance, the towel was soon placed across his mouth, leaving the nostrils open for respiration; then placing the brute's face downwards, after having first shown him the brass pistol, and recommending strict silence, they all went out together, carefully locking the three doors after them, and extinguishing the light.

As soon as the key was in the keyhole of the last door, Fitzjohn, taking Jane in his arms, stole noiselessly downstairs. There was now only the sentinel to pass at the last porch fronting the public walk, which was well planted with trees. Fitzjohn now sent Jane and Bell out before him, to wait for him beneath the shade; and having established a pass-word, he prepared to follow, as soon as they were out in safety.

Scarcely had Gentleman Jack and his middy got down to the sentinel, when the guard came to relieve him; fortunately, he had the presence of mind not to run on or retrace his steps, but coolly stepped aside behind an angle of the wall. As soon as the sentinel had been relieved, he went to the appointed rendezvous, to find Jim and his charge; but, with true hearts of oak, they, ignorant of the cause of the delay, had returned to the prison. Fitzjohn not finding them amongst the trees, was on the point of going back, when fortunately he met them just in time, and they all departed together for the gate of the town, which Fitzjohn had carefully noted in his morning's walk around the ramparts.

On the arrival of our party at the gate, they found the bridge half drawn up, but one franc induced the guard to lower it down, so that they passed out of the town in safety.

Here, then, were our adventurers, at half-past ten at night, the snow and sleet falling fast, and just escaped from a prison, where their absence must be discovered at latest by six on the next morning, the hour appointed for the departure of Fitzjohn for Biche. All of them had on some portion of their uniforms, though Fitzjohn had put a brown Flushing coat over his commander's dress. Fourteen days' journey now lay before them, and this in the worst season of the year, with only three shillings and sixpence in their pockets, to meet the many expenses that must fall on them.

But nothing dispirits the British sailor; and finding it quite impossible to get into the proper road without a guide, and unable to afford paying for one, they stopped a baker's apprentice. This worthy youth, by dint of promises, and the fear of the brass pistol, which they were obliged to show him occasionally, undertook to conduct them to a

place called Kylkuit Dyk, eighteen miles off, where a passage-boat would leave the island at six the next morning, and land them at Buitnoslys, about twenty miles from Rotterdam.

The treacherous baker was, however, too deep for their purpose, and led them into a battery of seven guns, where, fortunately, the guard being asleep, and the sentinel also in his box, they walked through without being discovered. About four o'clock the next morning they arrived at the passage-house at Kylkuit Dyk, where the passengers were collecting to cross over in the first boat.

Poor Jane and the midshipman were by this time so completely knocked up by their long and painful night's march, that they were overcome with sleep, and obliged to lay down on the wooden benches in the passage-house, whilst Fitzjohn stood sentry over the baker, until the boat was ready to depart.

Fitzjohn now having made the baker promise not to mention who they were, assured him that if he kept his word he should receive a handsome reward at a future time. Scarcely, however, was the passage-boat out of hail, when our friend felt satisfied that the man of loaves had broken his promise, by the number of persons collected on the beach, gazing and pointing towards them.

As the passengers consisted chiefly of old persons of both sexes, our adventurers at first intended to take possession of the passage-boat and put to sea; but having no water or provisions on board, and the wind blowing directly on the Dutch coast, there appeared no prospect of ultimate success, and this scheme was abandoned.

The payment for crossing the ferry left them with only two sous; and as it was of the greatest consequence to get to the passage across the Maese River opposite to Rotterdam before any general alarm was given, it was decided at a council of war to sell all their shirt-pins, rings, &c.; which being done, the sale brought them six francs more than the hire of a stool waggon, which they engaged to carry them forward to the next point of their destination.

Whilst on their road, one of their wheels broke down, which caused two hours' delay; and two *gens d'armes*, trotting past at a brisk rate, inquired of the driver whether he had seen three English vagabonds "*à pied*" on the road;

to which Fitzjohn boldly answered, the persons in question had passed the waggon half an hour before; and on hearing this, away went the *gens d'armes* after them.

CHAPTER LVIII.

As it was necessary to use the utmost caution, and to avoid getting to the passage of the Maese until after dark, Fitz contrived so to delay his driver, that they arrived about nine o'clock; and finding the inn quite full of French troops, Fitzjohn and his party sat down and supped at the same table with the sergeants.

Frenchmen are always inquisitive as to the object of a stranger's journey, what he may have been about, and what he is going to do. Fitzjohn, therefore, far from shunning their curiosity, put on an air of great candour, and told them that he was captain of an American ship that had been wrecked in the late dreadful gales, and that all the ship's company had been lost excepting the mate and two cabin-boys who were with him, and that they were going to Rotterdam to see the American consul, and get relief.

All this was readily believed; and about ten o'clock at night they found themselves in the town of Rotterdam, unable to speak one word of the language, unknown to every one, and only possessing between them all some fifteen pence.

There is, perhaps, nothing in Europe more dull and monotonous than a Dutch city after sunset. The regular habits of the Dutch, their early hours, and extreme economy, leave their cities almost in darkness. Never, however, despairing, notwithstanding the sea of difficulties which surrounded them, Fitzjohn at last found a boy to conduct him through the thickly-falling snow to the house of the American consul, an Englishman, the well-known Mr. F., whose kindness is justly appreciated and esteemed by all who have ever heard of him.

After laying before him the distressed situation of himself and friends, Fitz requested shelter for his two younger companions, and accommodation for himself, by cashing a small bill on Sir Sidney Smith. The consul having heard Gentleman Jack's story, and seen his commission, which he

ripped out from the collar of his coat, said that he should be most happy to receive Mrs. Graves and the middy, but that under all the circumstances he dared not extend his hospitality any further. "With regard to the money, no better security could be given me than the name of Sir Sidney, though this is not necessary: for two days since I received a letter from a Dutch house in London, desiring me to place to your credit two hundred pounds on account of a Mrs. Davis." "To credit me," said Fitz, in astonishment, "you must be mistaken; I don't know such a person." Taking the said letter out of the consul's hand, he acknowledged it must be intended for him, but from whom or why sent he could not divine. At last he recollected, from the name, that it must be the lieutenant's widow, whom he had assisted, but how *she* could have traced him was a greater mystery than all the rest. Never, however, was money more welcome; and having taken a few pounds of it, Fitzjohn and Jim Bell were obliged to quit the consul's comfortable fireside for the deeply-covered snow-streets again.

Wandering they knew not whither, Fitz observed a *café* open, and walking in deliberately with Jim, they found themselves amongst some French officers playing at billiards. As Bell could not play he laid down on a bench and slept, but Fitz took his turn at the billiard-table with the rest; and when the hour of closing the house came, the luckless pair were still without beds. In vain they applied to the *garçon* of the house—none were to be had; and it was some time before Gentleman Jack's fresh supply of money could procure him this convenience.

Several days passed in the same manner, the kind consul having shown them every kindness in his power. At last Fitzjohn, finding that a reward of four thousand rix-dollars was offered for his apprehension, thought it was necessary for himself and party to pursue their journey to Emden as soon as possible; but still he had hopes, that by proceeding to the sea-coast they might seize a boat, and gain some English cruiser.

The whole party being well supplied with thick coats, and all traces of uniform, with the exception of his own, destroyed, it became necessary that he too should take the same precaution. Going into a Jew's shop, in order, as he

thought, that it might be done more securely, he had no sooner made his selection than, pulling off the brown watch-coat he had so constantly worn over his epaulettes, Moses discovered the English uniform; the reward came into his head, and he started out of his shop to call the police. But Fitzjohn, fearing what might happen, did not wait for his return, and was far away before he had time to come back.

As the alarm was now given, Fitzjohn decided to start for the sea-coast that evening, which they all did. On the outskirts of the town he fell in with a gentleman apparently going to a feast or supper, and by the aid of the brass-mounted pistol, Fitz *persuaded him to change* coats, which in all countries is admitted to be *no robbery*. The good gentleman having, *malgré lui*, accepted the difference, our friends hurried to the sea-side, so that at daylight the next morning they found themselves on the sand-hills near Nordwyck-op-Zee.

The long-continued gale had obliged the careful Dutchmen to haul their boats high up on the beach, where it was impossible to launch them. Playing the part of a sea-gull, therefore, for three nights on the coast of Holland, in the month of December, and sleeping on the sand, under the lee of a Dutch fishing-boat, as poor Jane and the rest were obliged to do, is not to be described or understood by those who are used to comfortable warm beds. Fearing that a repetition of this might prove fatal to her for whom they were all most interested, it occurred to Fitzjohn that the best thing he could do would be to house the "wee things" comfortably at a school for the winter, whilst he and Jim scrambled on in the best way they could.

Putting on a face as brazen as his useful little friend the pistol, he knocked at the door of a school in the village, telling the master that he had heard of his reputation, and brought his nephews, two American youths, to be taught French and arithmetic; he then examined the beds, and made the most minute inquiries, so that the unsuspecting schoolmaster little thought he was sheltering two prisoners of war when he agreed to receive the "nephews" as two parlour-boarders, giving each a separate room, with perfect exemption from mixing with any one else in the house, and agreeing to board Jim Bell as their servant, Fitzjohn not choosing to leave them wholly without protection.

A quarter's schooling having been paid in advance, and the master well satisfied with his scholars, Fitzjohn took his leave with a heavy heart, and, promising to write soon, set off.

The course of Fitzjohn was now through Amsterdam, and across the Zuyder Zee: avoiding large towns as much as possible. On the afternoon of the twelfth day since parting with his friends, to whom he had many an anxious wish to return, he at length reached the frontier town of Nieuwe Schans, which separated the then French province of Holland from Prussia.

Having no passport, nor any other paper to show who he was, excepting his English commission, which he had again sewn up in the collar of his coat, and the American certificate of John Brown, Gentleman Jack thought it most advisable to try the effect of the latter. Quietly walking to the sentinel at the city gate, he produced the American certificate of citizenship to the soldier, the *wrong side upwards*, and soon discovered that he could not read, although he pretended to peruse every line and word.

This difficulty being surmounted, he went to the inn, and as in those days every fortified town was carefully locked up at sunset, so at that hour himself and those who were going out were obliged to depart. As Fitzjohn was determined to get into Prussia as soon as possible he contrived to find two strapping daughters of a Prussian farmer going the same road, to the small village of Bunde, who very kindly allowed him to take advantage of their knowledge of the way, which lay chiefly over ploughed fields, and ankle deep in snow. Dear woman! who in danger or distress ever appealed to you for sympathy and kindness—and appealed in vain?

After travelling with this good escort for about three leagues, Fitzjohn had passed the frontier, and was safe in Prussia.

As soon as the damsels had convinced him of this fact, Fitzjohn in a transport of joy went down on his knees, and taking out the spirits he had still left in his travelling case, drank with the truest feeling of his heart to the health of the "*König von England*," to the great astonishment of his companions, who heartily joined in the pledge, when he had explained the precarious situation from which he was now extricated.

At one in the morning, Fitz and his fair guides reached the village of Bunde, consisting of about sixty straggling houses and huts, which occupied a length of nearly half a mile. At the upper end of the village the girls took their leave of him, pointing out to Fitzjohn where the auberge, or *poste huis* was situated, nearly at the other extremity. After narrowly escaping from being bitten by the numerous dogs in his way down the village, he arrived quite exhausted and sinking from fatigue, at the door of the auberge.

The only answer he could here get from the surly host, was to go away, and come on the morrow. Fitzjohn at last bethought himself to try the far-famed grip of freemasonry, and having got his host once more to the window, the well-known sign being given, the landlord descended immediately, and making up a good fire, and spreading an excellent supper, Fitzjohn soon forgot all his cares between two comfortable beds of down. Desiring not to be called on the next morning, it was not until mid-day had long been past that he awoke from one of the most refreshing slumbers it had ever been his fortune to enjoy.

CHAPTER LIX.

AFTER staying three days at his present quarters, to recruit himself, Fitzjohn started off for Pragem, and embarked for Emden, where he arrived in twelve hours. An English merchant, on whom the American consul had given him a letter of credit, very kindly received and supplied him with the rest of the money from Mrs. Davis, which he had not drawn before. Sending a guarded account of his safety, together with a sufficient remittance to Jim Bell and Jane, at Nordwyck-op-Zee, he desired the schoolmaster to send on "his family" immediately to Emden, with his certificate that they had come from his school, which certificate on the road answered all the purpose of a passport for them.

Here in the course of three weeks, then, "his family" arrived, and the meeting of the four in safety, after all they had gone through, was one of the most affecting scenes that can be imagined.

As the winter was setting in, and there was some danger

of the passage being stopped by the ice, Fitzjohn engaged four berths on board a galliot bound to London, and which was to have sailed the next morning, but unfortunately she took fire in the course of the night, and it was with great difficulty that our party reached the shore in a boat, amongst the broken masses of floating ice with which the river abounded.

As if fortune were determined to persecute them to the last, the master of the galliot now accused Fitzjohn of being the cause of the fire. In consequence of this most groundless charge, he was incarcerated for two days in a cold Prussian cell, and but for the kindness of the English merchant before alluded to, would have remained there all the winter.

The only chance that now remained to the fugitives of reaching England, was by taking their passage in an American ship, bound for New York, trusting to be put on board an English man-of-war, or landed on the coast of England or Ireland in going down channel. Having embarked upon this chance, on the morning that the vessel sailed, she had scarcely dropped down the river, when the French guard-boat came after her, from the fortress of Delfzyl, which was garrisoned by French troops.

Fitzjohn fortunately had not told the master of the ship his name or profession, so that he, in a most happy state of ignorance with regard to the reward, as well as to the pursuit that was making after him, never dreamed of slackening sail, but held on his course seaward. The boat with the republican flag at her stern was now gradually lost in the horizon with the land, and our hero at last found himself safe at sea. As the wind was fair, and the ship in ballast, she scudded fast on her course, and greatly did one and all rejoice at the liberty they had acquired; but their rejoicing, though natural, was neither prophetic nor well-timed, for on the third evening the vessel struck on the Lemon and Oar, a dangerous and dreadful shoal off the coast of Norfolk. The sea running mountains high, she soon seriously damaged her bottom, and, beating over the shoal, got into four fathoms water. The anchor was forthwith let go, but notwithstanding every effort, it was found impossible to keep her afloat. The master, his wife, and seventeen seamen left the vessel in the long-boat, leaving Fitzjohn, his

party, and seven seamen on board ; before the long-boat had left the vessel ten minutes, a sea overwhelmed her, and all hands were lost. The command of the ship now devolved by unanimous consent on Fitzjohn, who ordered a spring to be got on the cable, the foresail and foretopsail loosed, and then having been cut away from her anchor, the vessel was cast towards shore, as the only chance of saving the lives of those upon her deck.

An hour before midnight this ill-fated craft struck the beach just under Hunstanton Lighthouse. At the first shock, away went the masts, and the second and third coming close together, she broke in two at the gangway—the fore-castle part to which all were now clinging, being thrown so far ashore, as to be in comparative safety from the fury of the waves ; while the stern, from drawing more water, remaining aground further out to sea, was in a few minutes dashed to atoms. Fitzjohn now saw that the chief danger was past. He knew that the tide had an hour more to ebb, and he would not allow one of his friends to stir until the retreating water left the vessel nearly dry. By this means all hands were saved, with the exception of two seamen, who would insist that the tide was on the flow, and foolishly lost their lives in the backwash of the beach.

In such a case, when the heavy surf throws its prey up the shore, great care is required not to be washed back by the returning sea ; so that it is only by the individual having presence of mind to grasp the sand, and keep the head close down, that a few feet can be gained between the reflux of each wave, when, if the strength does not fail, success will ultimately reward this truly awful struggle.

CHAPTER LX.

AFTER the narrow—and perhaps, it would not be profane to add, almost miraculous—deliverance from a horrid death, recorded in the last chapter, it may well be supposed that Jane Graves, so long the sport of every species of calamity, was reduced to the most extreme exhaustion.

Fortunately, the people among whom she was now thrown, far different from some who have disgraced our isles, not

only rendered every assistance in their power in saving the lives of the wrecked, but crowded round to offer them immediate assistance and shelter. Among others thus solicitous to extend the sphere of their usefulness was a rich, honest farmer, whose acres lay not far distant, and to his rude but hospitable home our party were conveyed in a kind of spring-van, and every attention afforded them.

The farmer's wife having been initiated into the secret of Jane's apparel, took every precaution that prudence could suggest to ward off the evil consequences likely to arise from such long and severe exposure on a frame previously weakened by no ordinary trials.

But there was a balm, that perhaps operated with greater certainty than even the care, the posset, or the blankets of Mrs. Cumming—I mean that innate buoyancy of a happy, thankful heart, which feels in bounding gratitude that it has been delivered from much dreaded peril, and what is still more bracing to it, that those it loves are safe; that, in short, there is a world of happy days for which to live, and life itself “a charmed life,” to them.

Tired as she was, she did not forget upon her pillow the sacred duty that its rescued blessings imposed upon her, and sinking back with the confidence of a guiltless mind, slept all the better for the ills she had come through.

How beautiful is such an hour! We sit in judgment on the follies and fatuities of others, and with all the solemnities of the law issue commissions “*de lunatico inquirendo*.” But can there be a greater madness than to have experienced an hour, such as I have attempted to describe, and yet to have wandered back to this maze of intrigue, ambition, fraud, falsehood, and iniquity—the world? yet who of all who read these lines, can in his own heart find a full and fair acquittal of such insanity?

Three days more of nursing, and the whole of our party were pronounced by the surgeon of the neighbouring village to be in a state sufficiently convalescent for travelling. The fourth witnessed the arrival of Lady Fitzjohn, to whom her dutiful son had written on the morning after his shipwreck. As he told her the exact position of affairs, she brought in her carriage, to use the phraseology of Jim Bell, a complete fit-out for Jane Graves, who returned to Dolly Cumming, the farmer's eldest daughter, the various habiliments

with which that damsel had kindly disguised her, together with a present in money sufficient to buy, four times over, the young rustic's wardrobe. After giving the whole family of the worthy farmer the warmest invitation to visit them in London that words could express, our party took a grateful leave of their hospitable entertainers, and set off, a very sufficient carriage-full, for London.

Here Fitzjohn found, that human life was still human life,* all the world over, and not long to be the fairy passage of enchanting delight whose enjoyment had gilded the few last days. The mother of Jane Graves had but a fortnight since died of a broken heart—grieving over the loss of that beloved daughter who, had Providence permitted to the parent a brief space more of life, would in so short a period have been restored to her bosom.

This sad event at once dashed all Jane's expected happiness with the deepest sorrow, and no argument that Fitzjohn could use was sufficient to prevent her paying to her mother's tomb that returning visit that its dear inhabitant was not to be allowed to see. Having accompanied Mrs. Graves to her father's vicarage, our hero returned to town once more, where other troubles awaited him.

His noble father had, it seems, lately proposed to an heiress of great expectations, and the fact of the intended marriage was accredited in every circle. On hearing this, Lady Fitzjohn immediately sent her worthy lord notice, that she would take instant steps for proving the validity of their union, unless she received a written disavowal of any intention of such second marriage. To her letter, his lordship had thought fit to send no reply, but the affair getting—as every one knows how all one's private affairs do get—into the newspapers, the contemplated match was instantly broken off by the lady's family with the utmost indignation.

Lady Fitzjohn was now irresolute whether to proceed

* The mention of human life tempts me too strongly for my weak powers of resistance, to pay a just tribute to the exquisite work of this name, from the pen of Mr. Ward. An early copy which has fallen in my way, enables me to say, with equal admiration and respect, that it is a work where all that is most cherished in our own thoughts is beautifully chronicled in the language of another; a work from which few men of reflection can arise without wishing for the acquaintance, as well as the writings, of its author.

with her claims or not, and in this stage of her uncertainty, Gentleman Jack arrived in England. His counsel was, of course, immediately asked, and the real title of his father communicated to him, under strict promise of never seeking him for any purpose, hostile or otherwise.

After a mature deliberation, it was formally determined that Lady Fitzjohn *should* proceed to establish the long withheld rights of herself and son, to whom she now turned for the *rem pecuniam*—the sinews of law as well as war—in other words, the cash. Here poor Fitzjohn looked very blank, and candidly told his mother that he had spent every farthing of it, though he did not feel it necessary to say how. Here then they were once more at a standstill; but Gentleman Jack, accustomed to think nothing of such a contemptible thing as money, told his mother and her attorney, that as for the few thousands that were wanted, he could raise them with ease in a hundred places. At this, his mother sighed, and the attorney smiled, adding that he was a very fortunate young gentleman.

Gentleman Jack, in the pride of youth and young friendships, thought so too, and the next day set about his easy task. But though it was very true that there were “a hundred places” in which the loan of money had been offered him when he did *not* want it, still he only the more truly discovered that there were “a hundred places” where the said promise of a loan was refused and evaded, when he really did want it.

As with a sailor’s foolish ingenuousness he everywhere began these applications to his “friends,” by frankly stating to them the situation in which he was placed, so each in turn was conversant with his affairs separately, and only laughed at the desperate position of them whenever accident assembled these said “friends” collectively.

Under these circumstances, there was nothing surprising, though much excessively mortifying, in our hero’s one day stumbling on a paragraph roundly stating the poverty of the young claimant to a certain title, and ridiculing by every bye-wind the pretensions of such a penniless aspirant. Full of chagrin and annoyance, our hero was just deliberating whether he should shoot, hang, or drown the atrocious wretch, who dropped such gall upon his soul, when he received from his banker a letter, enclosing a note that day

received, with a cheque on the Bank of England for ten thousand pounds. The note in question merely stated that the writer had seen a paragraph, insinuating that pecuniary difficulties debarred Captain Fitzjohn from asserting his just rights. It then went on to say, that the writer had often seen with pleasure the name of Captain Fitzjohn in the various Gazettes, and now begged, as one whose liberties and possessions Fitz had helped to protect, to place the enclosed sum at his disposal, *for the purpose of proving the legality of his birth*. This singular communication was evidently written in a disguised hand, and so was the cheque; the name of *A. Jones* was subscribed to both, and here ended all clue to the mystery. The people at the Bank of England could give no information, further than that the money was paid in one day, and all but fifty pounds drawn out the next, the account having stood as 10,050*l*. Mr. Jones had stated that he was known to a certain eminent house in Liverpool; and to save trouble, his *ipse dixit*, as well as the money, was received, and the reference made afterwards. The Liverpool house then replied, that they very well knew Mr. *G. Jones*, but not an *A. Jones*; but before this answer reached the bank directors, the worthy man in question had saved them all further trouble in unravelling his identity, by drafting off the largest part of his money in the manner already narrated. Further than this they could say nothing, but that he was an elderly gentleman, and, "*as a mercantile man*," ought to have been ashamed to play such a trick, thereby endeavouring to insinuate that mercantile men are the only people who do *not* play tricks, though touching this doctrine there may be two opinions, it is said, upon 'Change.

However, the thousands were good thousands, the draft—albeit a larger than any "anonymous writer" ever sends to me—was a good draft, and duly paid: the lawyers, honest men, got all their mills a going, and as there was no want of oil of the right sort for their machinery, they shook their heads most knowingly, and said that—nothing could be better!

Fitzjohn, however, here greatly differed from my learned brethren, and thought law monstrously dull work, and knowing that Jane would be busied in the seclusion of her own family for some months, he accepted an offer made to

him by the Admiralty, in a very flattering way, to take the command of a brig-of-war.

He was one evening lounging in the coffee-room of Fenton's hotel, when one of the Admiralty porters brought him a note from the first lord, desiring to see him immediately. Jumping into a coach, he hurried down to Whitehall without delay, and there was asked by Lord M—— if he could make it convenient to set off on the ensuing morning for Plymouth, and take command of his majesty's brig *Vulture*, at present under the command of another officer. Having considered the matter for a few minutes, he replied, that he was not aware that any obstacle existed on his part, and orders were in consequence given, by which his commission was at once drawn up, and then delivered to him by the first lord in person.

On returning to Arlington Street, his mother did, it is true, think this movement rather sudden; but as she could perceive no solid reason for keeping him idle in town, she raised no objection, and having written off to Jane, to state this new change in his fortunes, he got on the top of a stage-coach, and started the next morning for the west.

CHAPTER LXI.

ON arriving at Plymouth Dock at an early hour in the morning, Fitzjohn put up at an hotel, and while breakfast was preparing, took a walk on Mountwise, to try if his future craft was to be seen.

Having asked of the first old seaman whom he met, which was the *Vulture*, the man pointed to a man-of-war, of large size, then lying in that beautiful little bay, Barn Pool. It did not require much inspection or skill to perceive that, from some cause or another, the *Vulture* was not kept in a state of discipline the very best for his majesty's navy; but with the exception of her rigging, yards, and paint, not appearing in good order, it was evident that she was a fine vessel of her class; and Fitz, as he looked at her, mentally determined that she should soon have ample justice at his hands.

As he had not been given to understand the reason why her present commander was to be superseded, he

naturally imagined that there might be some little unpleasantness at the bottom of the matter; and, therefore, wrote a very civil note, stating the fact of his having been sent down by the Admiralty, and asking if it would be agreeable that he should that day repair on board to read his commission. In reply, he received the excuses of the officer in question—whom we shall call Captain Thomas—stating that he was too much indisposed to see him that day, but would send his galley for Captain Fitzjohn on the following morning at eleven o'clock. Fitz now passed the intervening time in amusing himself, and at the appointed hour was ready to go afloat. Half-past eleven, however, came, and no boat; and our hero, fearing to receive another excuse if he waited any longer, at once took a shore-boat from the stairs, and set off alone. On gaining the deck of the brig, he found everything in the greatest confusion and neglect; the quarter-master of the watch, and the corporal of marines, taking a quiet bout at fisty-cuffs on the gangway, some of the men looking on from forward, and a middy sitting on a gun abaft similarly employed, but with this addition, that he was smoking a cigar.

At the awful apparition, however, of a pair of epaulettes, the whole scene changed like the whisk of the magic lantern. The fight ceased, the combatants vanished, and the lighted cigar was shoved into Mr. Midshipman's pocket. "Well," thought Fitz, "I did once command a privateer; but her discipline was ten thousand times better than this." On asking for the captain, he was said not to have left his bed for three days.

"Where then was the first lieutenant?"—"Gone shooting."

"And the second lieutenant?"—"Taking a walk on Mount Edgecumbe."

"And the master?"—"Gone to the dockyard."

"What for?"—"Don't know, sir."

"Who's commanding officer, then?"—"Why," with some hesitation, "I suppose I am."

"When you're commanding officer, do you *generally* amuse yourself by watching how well your men can fight one another?"—"Not always, sir."

"Glad to hear it. Now take my card down to the

captain, and say, I was fearful lest his boat might have missed me, and so I'm come on board to read my commission."

Accordingly, after some short delay, this was accomplished; the next day, the late commander took away all his property, and left the ship for Fitzjohn to take possession. This he did. Poor Captain Thomas was an extraordinary instance of the power of the passions of love and grief combined. He had formed a strong attachment, and was on the point of being married to a beautiful girl. Just before the ceremony, his brig was ordered to sea for three weeks. Having taken leave of the lady in question in perfect health, they were to have been united on his return. Two days after the Vulture left the port, a loosened tile, falling from the roof of her father's house, fractured her skull; and when Captain Thomas, full of hope, came back from sea—she was buried! Violent delirium ensued, and subsequent to that, a languor and apathy of mind, which was but a mild form of insanity. Every one felt for him, poor fellow, and for a long time the true state of the case was glossed over; but in the discipline of the brig, he just interfered enough to render nugatory the authority of the first lieutenant, without going far enough to remedy the want of this, by the full exercise of his own. The result we have witnessed.

As soon as Fitzjohn was fairly captain of the vessel, he called the officers together in his cabin, and said, "Gentlemen, I am fully aware of the manner in which you have lately been accustomed to discharge your various duties; but I do not summon you here to throw blame on any quarter. The cause of whatever remissness may have taken place is sufficiently melancholy already. I merely wish, therefore, to tell you that a total change must take place in the efficiency of this vessel. I hope that none of you will find me harsh—and none, I am sure, uncourteous. I am, moreover, most desirous of affording you every reasonable indulgence in my power. But in return for this, I tell you plainly, that I will have from every one a most perfect performance of the duty of each, in default of which you will find no more consideration at my hands than the articles of war afford. Gentlemen, we now understand one another, you may retire."

Fitzjohn, having now time to look about, discovered no reason to be dissatisfied with his little brig, as far as her own capabilities went. She mounted sixteen guns, and carried a complement of ninety-six officers and men, all hands included, was a fair sea-boat, and promised, under good management, to be a snug little craft. Fitzjohn's next step towards bringing this about, was the requesting permission of the port-admiral, Sir Billy Oldjunk, to be allowed to remain in Plymouth Sound, exempt for some days from every other duty than that of making her fit for the service expected. The men, he soon saw, were in such a state of disgust and discontent with one another, from the really good men having to do all the work of the lazy, that her boat could not leave the ship for any duty on shore, without having in the bows a marine with a loaded musket to prevent desertion; and as for any of her crew having a day's leave on shore, no such relaxation had ever been thought of for months. As soon as Fitzjohn felt that he could report his brig as fit to do her duty at sea, he requested three days more rest in port from the commander-in-chief, who, notwithstanding his well-known austerity, granted this to him.

When Gentleman Jack, after this, returned on board, he summoned the ship's company on the quarter-deck, and gave them their turn of "a little speechification," to the following effect:—"It is now only a few days since," said Fitzjohn, "that I had the honour of taking command of this brig; and I have learnt in this time from the officers, that leave on shore has not for a considerable period been granted to the ship's company. I have now, therefore, determined to make an experiment, which may cost me my commission; but I entrust it to the honour of British seamen. Let every man of the starboard watch name his bondsman of the larboard watch, who will be responsible in his own personal liberty for his friend's return, and I will grant leave on shore to one watch at a time. But if those on shore fail to return at the appointed hour, then his bondsman shall suffer, by not being allowed to leave the ship. Thus I wish to bind you by a mutual feeling of honour towards each other, not to give me occasion to recur to the disagreeable duty of stopping your leave on shore. To this I must now add one word on the subject

of punishment before you go below, that no one may plead ignorance in future. The king's duty must and shall be done. By the articles of war, which I hold in my hand, you shall all strictly abide, every officer and man under my command. There shall, in this ship, be no stopping of grog, brightening of shot, rope's-ending, or other disgraceful and unauthorised punishments; but every man committing a breach of these articles, will be as surely punished as he lives. Some mitigation may, for the first time, be allowed; but a second commission of the same offence can *never* be pardoned. I am aware that after such a long absence from the shore, no man can be expected to come on board the next morning; therefore, each watch shall have two nights and one whole day on shore. Those who go on shore this Thursday afternoon, must be on board on Saturday before twelve o'clock, and those who go on shore on Saturday afternoon, must return on Monday morning."

This system of arrangement and this decided mode of conduct soon rendered the brig's crew so happy, that during the whole of Fitzjohn's command of her, no marines were ever in his time needed with loaded muskets in his boats. Confident that there was no ship to which they could have changed for the better, only one desertion ever took place, and that in the case of one of the boys.

The crew of the *Vulture* having all returned to their leave, and the brig reported quite ready for service, Sir Billy Oldjunk ordered Gentleman Jack on a cruise of trial for ten days in the chops of the Channel. On the ninth day, the wind blowing strong from the south-west, and Fitzjohn feeling very anxious to return as soon as possible to Plymouth, where he expected to find a long letter lying for him from Mrs. Graves, he ventured at noon to bear up and get to safe anchorage under the breakwater late in the evening.

As soon as the brig was safely moored, he went to Sir Billy to report his arrival. The admiral, who was known for not wasting the king's time by circumlocution, looked at Fitzjohn for a minute or two, as if exercising his recollection; he then gruffly said, "Your cruise is not up, young man; what brought you in, sir?"

"Why—a—hem!" stammered Fitzjohn. "Very rough

weather, sir—blowing so hard—brig complained—the wind brought me in, admiral.”—“Then, sir, let the wind take you out again at daybreak to-morrow morning, and finish your cruise.”

Fitz, upon this, made his bow, went to the post, got his letters, and half-an-hour after daylight was off Penlee Point. I need scarcely add, that Sir Billy's next orders were executed to the letter.

On coming back to the Sound next day, who should walk on board, to Fitzjohn's great delight, but Jim Bell, to whom our hero had written the day after taking command, and to whom he now gave charge of a watch.

But besides the Vulture, Fitz now had a far more curious animal under his command. And that a pig!—not the learned pig, but a boar-pig, one of three, brought on board as part of the captain's stock. This worthy having had his life spared, because the stock was not exhausted at the end of the cruise for which he had been bought, the ship's company became so attached to him, that, when quite young, one of them invariably took him down from the brig's upper-deck to the between-decks to dinner.

As master pig grew larger, and could no longer be carried down without inconvenience, he regularly watched for the pipe to dinner, and rolled himself down the main-deck ladder into the between-decks of his own accord, the slope of the ladder being too great to allow of his getting down in the more usual and dignified mode of walking. When once down below, Mr. Piggy used to go round to the different messes, and get something to eat or drink from each: whether biscuit, pea-soup, or grog, it was indifferent to Jack, as they nicknamed him; but if any mess refused him their quota, he would rush in amongst them, and try to break some of their plates or other utensils.

Jack at last became so furious, that he used to attack the officers on the quarter-deck; and one day with great insubordination, singled out Fitzjohn, because, whilst the ship's company were at dinner, the heavy rolling of the brig prevented the possibility of his getting down below to share it with them.

With such an enemy at his heels, Fitz, for the first time, “fled the fight,” being obliged to run up the Jacob's ladder to escape being bitten. After this most mutinous example

to the crew, Master Jack's execution was decided for the next morning; but the crew sent aft a petition, requesting that his life might be spared. This was granted. In the end, however, his ferocity greatly increasing, he was of necessity turned into pork. Loth to shy their old friend in his last extremity, the worthy crew, with whom Jack Pig had eaten so many hearty dinners, now ate a hearty dinner on Jack Pig. "For," as the boatswain feelingly observed, "one good turn deserves another, all the world over."

CHAPTER LXII.

THE Vulture was now ordered off to Sheerness with some troops, and just as she got to the Nore, she fell in with the notorious and fast-sailing French privateer, *Le Renard*, which, after an anxious chase of forty hours, ran aground under a Danish battery. As she kept her colours flying, Fitzjohn came to an anchor just opposite the battery, and keeping the privateer between them, opened a most rattling fire on her.

This brought a message off from the governor of the battery, with a flag of truce, to say that the privateer was under the protection of the neutral battery, and that by a certain treaty she could not be attacked.

A copy of this treaty was at the same time forwarded to Fitzjohn, who, after reading it very leisurely, was unable, from a natural slowness of comprehension, to see that it contained any one provision for the case in point, namely, that of an enemy chased in from sea, and still keeping her colours flying.

On this ground, therefore, he wrote the following letter to the governor, and sent with it one of his own boats, which he desired to pull as slowly as possible. He, in the meantime, keeping up his close fire with all the spirit in his power.

"SIR,—I have very attentively perused the treaty sent off by your flag of truce, and I cannot find any allusion to the present circumstance; my orders, as well as my determination, are, to burn, sink, and destroy an enemy when-

ever I can fall in with him. The ambassadors of our two nations will decide our differences of opinion upon a future occasion.

“Yours always,
“A. FITZJOHN.”

By the time Fitzjohn's boat returned, *Le Renard's* bottom was like a sieve, and in a few minutes more she blew up, by which means our commerce was relieved of a very troublesome and annoying depredator; nor had our hero at night one wink of sleep the less, for thinking how his decision would be ruled by the ambassadors.

Fitzjohn, after landing the troops at Sheerness, returned to his station at Plymouth, and while lying one day in the Sound, at single anchor, ready for sea, three post-chaises, with four horses, came driving down the High Street of Plymouth Dock, having brought Sir Archibald Campbell and eight other gallant British officers, bound for Portugal, whither they were going to discipline those troops of our allies, destined to form a part of Sir Arthur Wellesley's army.

Fitzjohn's brig was immediately selected by the port-admiral to take them over to Lisbon; and getting under weigh whilst at dinner, and having a fair wind on Friday, they were by Tuesday all landed, to the great joy and comfort of themselves as well as to the advantage of the service on which they were to be employed.

The *Vulture* was now employed on the coast of Galicia, and was at Vigo when it surrendered. After which, returning home, she was attached to that splendid armament then collecting in the Downs, and destined soon to waste its immense strength in an ill-arranged and worse-conducted expedition to the Scheldt.

Soon after Fitzjohn had received notice that his vessel was to be one of those employed, he went on shore at Deal one afternoon to dine with some friends, and coming down to where his boat should have been at night, he found, to his surprise, that she was absent. Having taken a seat on some ballast-bags which lay on the beach to wait for his boat, which was then an hour or more after its appointed time, he was on the point of getting up to search for her at another part of the shore, when four men suddenly sprang upon him.

The first impulse of putting his hand to his sword for his personal defence, was easily frustrated, for his captors, standing round him, possessed a complete advantage over him. "What do you mean by this, you scoundrels?" exclaimed Fitzjohn. "I insist upon your releasing me this instant!"

"We don't mean to hurt or to offend you," replied a gruff, but decided voice: "but you cannot, shall not stir, by G—, so take things easy."

At this instant a large and beautiful lugger under all sail came running in from sea right on the beach. The night was beautifully clear, and scarcely a wave upon the surface of the waters. Scarcely had she touched the ground when a swarm of men ran down to the beach, and each loaded themselves with two kegs, one over either shoulder. Fitzjohn perceived that the lugger was a smuggler, running her cargo. The most perfect silence was observed, even to the speaking of one word; and as soon as the crew had absented themselves the men who had held Fitzjohn released him, saying, "We axes your pardon, captain, but we couldn't help it, but we're glad you made no nonsense of resistance, or we should have been obliged to sarve you out."

As soon as Fitzjohn was free, he, much amused, walked along the beach in search of his boat, which he found; his trustworthy coxswain having come to the appointed place at the hour ordered, and met a sailor, no doubt one of the smugglers, who had told him, as from his captain, to take the boat down to the dockyard, which is at the west end of Deal, and there await Fitzjohn's arrival. The coxswain stated, that after waiting two hours, four men came to the boat, and putting three kegs into the gig, desired their best respects to Captain Fitzjohn, they having sent him a present, 'cause as how he was a good sort of chap. They then told the coxswain that he would find his captain at the place first appointed, and sitting on some ballast-bags.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE day after the funny adventure just recorded, the Vulture was ordered to reconnoitre the enemy's coast. A few

days before the expedition was completed, she returned, and Fitzjohn presented to his commander-in-chief, Sir Dickey Strong, the following report:—

“SIR,—In obedience to your orders, I proceeded to reconnoitre the enemy’s fleet, collected at Antwerp, Lillo, and Flushing, and along the line of coast of the river Scheldt. I have the honour to inform you that there appears to be collected in that river sixteen sail of the line, eleven frigates, and about thirty sail of smaller armed vessels and gun-boats. The distribution of them is nearly as follows: five sail of the line and two frigates at anchor off Flushing, two sail of the line in the basin of that arsenal, eight sail of the line and six frigates off Fort Lillo, and the rest at Antwerp, whose state of equipment I could not of course ascertain, those below having all their sails bent and ready for a move.

“I have availed myself of two opportunities to ascertain the state and number of troops in this vicinity. The one from an English smuggler, which the boats of the Vulture boarded an hour after she had left the port of Flushing, and being without the limit which would have confiscated her illicit cargo to condemnation, was released; the other was a guard-boat of the enemy, which we had the good fortune to take by surprise during a very heavy and rainy night.

“On questioning the officer and men separately, as well as the master and two mates of the smuggler, together with a careful examination of the French and Dutch newspapers on board, it appears quite certain that Bonaparte has drained this part of the country of all the active disposable troops for his projected expedition against Austria; so that in the fortified towns on the coast, the garrison duty is chiefly done by the bourgeois local force.

“The batteries along the Cadsand shore are neither numerous nor formidable, and the artillery mounted on them are apparently of small calibre, as far as we could judge from appearance, and the few shot which have been fired at us during our reconnoissance, and which we have been obliged to provoke to ascertain the position of the batteries, which are concealed amongst the sand-hills.

“Those on the island of Walcheren, and more particularly in the immediate neighbourhood of the arsenal of

Flushing, are large and heavy cannon, and the batteries low down, or a *fleur d'eau*, as the French engineers term it.

"Herewith I have the honour of transmitting an outline or sketch of the run of the coast on each side, with the positions of the batteries, and the number of guns on each as far as we could make them out.

"In reference to the latter part of my instructions, wherein you desire me to give my opinion as to the best mode of attacking the enemy, so as to get possession of their fleet, I do myself the honour of suggesting, that if a division of the army were directed to land on Walcheren, and another division on Cadsand, protected by the lighter vessels of war, the main body of the army, protected by our line-of-battle ships, might proceed direct up the Scheldt to Antwerp. The enemy will no doubt move his ships of the line up the river on the first appearance of the expedition off the coast. Three of our line-of-battle ships, and two bomb-vessels, would occupy the attention of the batteries of Flushing, which front the sea, and as many fort Lillo; so that the remainder of the fleet and transports would pass nearly unmolested up the river, our ships of the line engaging each her opponent, which they may find bold enough to remain at anchor below the protection of the batteries of Antwerp. As the enemy's line-of-battle ships are well known to be only half manned, and most of those inexperienced in naval warfare, should they attempt to withstand our well-appointed ships of the line, commanded as they are by such experienced and gallant officers, they will fall an easy prey; but I presume they will haul into safety, under the protection of the citadel at Antwerp, in its basin, or in that branch of the Scheldt which runs between it and the city; so that all being drawn into a nucleus, our gallant troops will take them thus collected, as in a net.

"If, on the contrary, this movement should not be attended with success, I need not remind you, sir, that the river Scheldt being a tide-way river, and the distance so short between Antwerp and the sea, even with a continued adverse wind there would be no difficulty in getting down the river, and probably with less loss of life, than would be sacrificed to the well-known noxious and unhealthy

vapours arising from the swamps in this autumnal season.

“I have the honour to remain, &c.

(Signed)

“A. FITZJOHN.”

On the receipt of this report, Fitzjohn was summoned to attend the last council of war, which took place previous to the sailing of the expedition. The naval commander-in-chief expressed himself much pleased with the report; not so the commander-in-chief of the army. He had been bred in the old school of regular sieges and cautious movements. He was abrupt and cold in his manner to a degree, and it was finally decided that Fitzjohn's bolder plan should be abandoned, and the siege of Flushing be undertaken. In vain did Fitzjohn remind them that the sluices being once open, there would soon be three feet of water on the island. At last, about two months *too late* in the season, did this, the most formidably-equipped expedition that ever left the British shores, sail from the Downs for the Scheldt.

The ministry certainly in one way deserved the greatest credit for the excellent condition in which everything was ordered. No expense was spared, and every demand that the naval or military chiefs could make was liberally complied with, the materiel of both arms of the service was in the highest state of efficiency, and the soldiers and seamen in as much health as the same number of haymakers would have been in Devon or Dorsetshire. On the 28th of July, 1809, this expedition left the Downs with a fair wind.*

The advanced squadron being commanded by that gallant officer Sir Edward Owen, was led by the Vulture, and a most laughable incident for so serious a matter, occurred on the very night of sailing. The Vulture being, as I have said, the leading vessel of Sir Edward Owen's squadron, fell in about two in the morning with a well-painted and large Dutch-built schuyt. On nearing her, she was supposed to be the vessel of the Dutch commander-in-chief, come out to reconnoitre the English expedition. As the Vulture approached her, the white and well-fitted sails added strongly to this suspicion; and being always tenacious of damaging

* This expedition consisted of forty-two sail of the line, twenty-two frigates, a hundred or more small craft, two hundred and thirty odd gun and flat-bottomed boats, and a hundred thousand tons of hired shipping, carrying an army of thirty-seven thousand men.

his "prize-money," Gentleman Jack ranged up alongside, with an intention to board. Just at this critical instant, a fat old gentleman, with a black velvet nightcap on his head, bawled out in broad English, and much alarm, "What the devil are you going to do?" "Only to board you with forty men, that's all," answered Fitzjohn. "O, for God's sake, don't do anything of the sort! I am Alderman Curtis. You had better come on board alone, and dine with me to-morrow. I will give you some most excellent turtle!" All our hero's hopes of prize-money had now vanished, and cursing Alderman Curtis and his turtle-soup together, the Vulture stood on.

At daylight the next morning, the Vulture's signal was made to lead the squadron up the inner Wieling Channel, she being the in-shore leading ship; and sailing up with a fair wind, in a few hours the church of Antwerp hove in sight. Fitzjohn now began to hope that his plan of attack was to be put into execution, when, to his great mortification and regret, the signal was made to anchor.

At this anchorage the expedition laid for four days, whilst the enemy, with impunity, sent troops across from Cadsand to reinforce the garrison at Flushing. On the fifth afternoon, however, whilst two friends were dining with Fitzjohn, the Vulture's signal was made to "intercept passage of troop-laden boats." His guests hereupon were speedily bundled from the table, with the remainder of the leg of mutton on which they had been dining: and the Vulture, being soon under weigh, sailed up with a leading wind to take a position above the batteries of Flushing and Cadsand. Meanwhile, the grape-shot from one side fell on board of her, the round-shot from the other passed through her; but, despite of all, Fitzjohn would have been successful in his intended movement, had not the wind, veering, come down the river, so that the Vulture was obliged to beat up under this tremendous fire. By this means she became so much exposed as she tacked on either shore, that her upper masts were shot away, and she drifted on the sand abreast of their heavy battery, whose destructive fire, Fitzjohn had, a few years before, fully experienced in the cutter with his gallant commodore. Mortified as he was at this suspension of his plan, he had, at any rate, the full satisfaction of knowing not only that

he himself had discharged his duty, but that every one under him had done the same, from Jim Bell, who fought like a Trojan, to little Dewhurst, his aide-de-camp, whose first smell of powder this was.

As there appeared no hopes of saving the box, as the sailors call a small-class man-of-war, the boats of the fleet were sent to take out Fitzjohn and his crew before daylight, when the batteries would soon otherwise make an end of them. But notwithstanding that our hero Fitzjohn had been severely wounded, he would not consent to relinquish the Vulture, until he had made another effort to save her upon the flowing tide, in which he fortunately succeeded; but so crippled was she from the heavy fire to which she had been exposed, that in her fore and aft mainsail alone, there were no less than one hundred and fifty-seven shot holes, in addition to which she had several of her guns dismounted, and many of her gallant crew *hors de combat*.

As soon as she was once more moored in safety under the protection of the English fleet, the gallant Marquis of Anglesea, who commanded the division of British troops which were investing Flushing, most kindly sent Captain Thornhill, his aide-de-camp, to request Fitzjohn would make the marquis's head-quarters his home, until he had recovered his health,—an offer, the value of which he testified by an immediate and thankful acceptance of it.

The troops soon becoming affected with the endemic disease of the climate, and the island of Walcheren being inundated, as Fitz had prognosticated, from the sluices being open, our brave, unconquered soldiers died off like rotten sheep, so that the churches, which had been converted into hospitals, were obliged to be cleared of their dead morning, noon, and night. In a short time, Great Britain lost more than eighteen thousand of the flower of her gallant armies, who in vain prayed to be led against a foe more human than disease. In the midst of all this wretchedness, it was quite laughable to hear the aides-de-camp of the general-in-chief, praying his excellency not to expose his valuable life to the fire of the enemy's batteries. One day, Fitz happening to be standing by, told his lordship, that so far from this being good advice, he believed that the nearer he went, the safer he would be.

"Why so?"—"Because," replied Fitz, "if a ball strikes

your lordship from a distance, it will knock you into so many splinters, but close quarters always make clean work."

The earl, who did not relish this, made no reply, and walked off with his staff. But every one knew that it was not in courage, but the other qualities of a good general, that his lordship was so deficient.

As soon as the Vulture was repaired, she was destined to cover the retreat of the troops down the river, it being an undisguisable fact that the whole expedition was one of the most signal failures that had ever happened to our arms. Sad indeed was it to see those brave fellows dying by dozens on their march, so that the rear-guard was sometimes of necessity relieved not less than three or four times in the course of a night's march. As the French troops pressed on the rear of the fever-stricken army, the broadside of the Vulture was occasionally brought to bear, by a yaw, to check their progress, which she effectually did.

It was at one time expected that the town of Flushing would have been retained by the English, as a check upon the enemy's fleet lying at Antwerp. By this means would have been sustained the diversion the expedition had made upon the army of Bonaparte, who was obliged to send troops from Berlin to oppose the English; while, on our part, the object of the expedition might have been renewed with success in the spring.

When, however, the decision came from England to abandon the town and its works, the flood-gates were blown up, and the island relinquished; and then the English naval officers had an opportunity of appreciating the supposed *great services* of a notorious smuggler, whom the British government, contrary to the opinion of the naval commander-in-chief, had been ordered to entrust with the duty of blowing up the pier-head of Flushing.

This smuggler was sent out with two of the Fulton coffers before described; the management of which was always, however, attended with some danger, since the coffers, being placed in their position, the officer in charge of them had to pull out their skewer keys, and, as it sometimes happened that the pistol went off immediately upon withdrawing this *skewer*, it required some nerve to do it; but the officer was never thought to have done his

duty unless he brought on board with him this *skewer* proof.

The noted smuggler, then, in question, was employed for this dangerous duty, to the great chagrin of all those young officers who were sighing for an opportunity of doing something for their promotion. The appointment, however, was one of those politic strokes of the Admiralty of that day, the man having some of the men-of-war's boats placed under his directions to tow the coffers into their position. This being accomplished, every one waited with great anxiety for the return of the smuggler with the *skewer-key*; at last he arrived, but no skewer-key had he, which my gentleman, like a careful executor of his orders, pretended had fallen overboard.

Every glass in the fleet was now pointed to the object of interest, and, as the appointed hour of three A.M. was to have been the hour of explosion, no one can depict the disappointment which gradually took place, when three, four, and even five o'clock struck, and no pier-heads blew up.

Fitzjohn was at this juncture an expectant observer, with many others, on board the flag-ship; and happening to approach the gangway to return to the Vulture, a seaman, who had been in one of the men-of-war's boats attached to the smuggler, and who formerly had been with Fitzjohn in the Xantippe, when the coffers were tried, made himself known to his old commander and begged to congratulate him on his promotion. Presently he remarked to Fitzjohn that he had just returned the evening before from placing the coffers under the directions of the smuggler; but that the latter did not do last night, at the pier-head, as they did in Boulogne Roads, namely, pull the plug or skewer out.

This pretty *exposé* then at once most fully explained the reason of the explosion not taking place; and the seaman's statement was confirmed at low tide, by the whole fleet seeing the coffers lying high and dry on the mud, surrounded by an immense concourse of troops and other persons. Towards the afternoon, one of the coffers blew up, and the explanation of this curious scene was afterwards learnt from a French officer, who was taken prisoner, and who, mixing his bad English with his own language, told the story as follows:—

I must previously tell my reader that when the *skewer* was withdrawn, the pistol clock ticked like any other horologe, until it reached the hour of explosion; and the appearance of these coffers in the morning having been reported to the governor soon after daylight, by the officer of the guard, the former, when the ebbing tide left them *dry*, went down with his staff to examine them. The examination being over, and the governor departed, some carpenters were ordered to break them open, and discover their contents. Just as this was about to be done, a French sergeant espied the skewer, which had an eye to serve as a handle for its withdrawing, like a priming-wire. Master Sergeant having pulled this out, kindly and officiously called his friends to hear the tick, tick, tick.

"By Gar," said the French officer, who stood by, "me tink it some d—d English trick; I go to tell Governor Monet, but he saye, no come. Great many grandes officiers d'état major, make ready go to see dis tick, tick. Grand Dieu! it go up in de air with diable de noise; great many troop killed, and more dan von hondred wounded; tuder coffer me much fear, no one make him tick, tick, tick; all afraid—so we knock him to pieces with great gun from de battery."

CHAPTER LXIV

ON the return in the Downs of the ill-starred Walcheren expedition, Fitzjohn was attacked by that dreadful fever which had already laid low so many a fine fellow. The suddenness with which this unsparing disease affected the senses, rendered it impossible for Fitzjohn to give any directions as to what should be done for him; it was therefore agreed by his surgeon and Jim Bell, to remove him to the naval hospital without delay, and every care and attention was paid to him that skill or kindness could devise. His mother posted down from London with all the supposed *élite* of the physicians, who, having said there were no hopes, took their fees of fifty guineas each, and went back again as they came, in her carriage.

Notwithstanding this discouraging report, Lady Fitzjohn and Jim Bell watched day and night around his couch: and

aided by the skill and care of my friend Charley Hovell, then one of the medical officers of the hospital, who prescribed the fomented decoction of bark, was at last pronounced out of danger, and soon sufficiently convalescent to journey slowly on to London—one of the, alas! too few instances of an escape from that disease, whose gripe was rarely relaxed, and whose victims in a few months were counted by thousands.

Having once more reached Arlington Street, after a three-stage journey, Gentleman Jack was very much gratified on the third day after his arrival, by seeing Lord M—— enter the drawing-room. “Well, Captain Fitzjohn,” said his lordship, taking a seat, “since the king’s service has prevented you from coming to me at the Admiralty, I have come, instead, from the Admiralty to see you. I bring you, I hope,” putting his hand into his pocket, “a better tonic than these phials of ‘good Mr. Apothecary,’ now before you, can contain; and beg to congratulate you on your having won it with so much honour in the teeth of the Cadsand batteries.”

The heart of Fitzjohn, at this speech, so quickened its motion, as to send a most roseate hue into the cheeks, that long sickness had rendered pallid. With an intense eagerness and joy, he stretched out his hand towards the all-powerful first lord of the Admiralty, and received from him the reward of his past toils in a commission as post-captain.

It may be readily supposed that Fitzjohn was most voluble in his thanks, but these his lordship assured him were unnecessary; most kindly adding, “that they were more rightly due at home than in any other quarter; and that if, when further change of air became agreeable, Fitzjohn should wish to go afloat, there should be every facility given him of getting,” as his lordship humorously phrased it, “the pounce blown off his parchment.”

“Ah, those were the times!” I hear some shipless captain, half-pay commander, old lieutenant, or long past mate exclaim, as he reads the above.

True enough, old boy, they *were* the times, as you say: and if we can only manage to give her deserts to Russia, so they will be again. But these piping times of peace give promotion to no man, except, indeed, a few of my old

messmates—such as George Grey, Lord Clarence Paget, Pierrepont Carey, and some half-a-dozen *other old deserving officers* I could name. I will say nothing of the gallant gentleman who was the first lieutenant of us all, for he being a lieutenant still, and one of the above, a post-captain, and the other two commanders, it wouldn't look very well in a novel, being too extravagant for fiction, whatever it may do in the Navy List, where all is "sober *sad* reality." For a lucrative profession, in which unaided merit is *sure* to rise, commend me to the navy.

Revenons.—The first lord having taken his leave of Fitzjohn with that brevity, not to say abruptness, which characterises all great men, from Sir Stephen Love Hammick, downwards, our hero was once more left alone; so jumping up with his commission in one hand, he dashed all the medico's bottles into the fire with the other, declaring that a post-captain of such brief creation could want no physic upon earth.

Having made his servant rig him out in a good warm riding-dress, and bring his horse to the door, he mounted, though, in sea-phrases, rather shaky; and having ridden round to all his naval friends whom he could find out to be resident in London, and engaged them all to dine with him that evening at Fenton's, by eight o'clock, they proceeded in the glorious rights of that immemorial custom of wetting a new commission, which was most duly done. Among his guests was Topham, who explained the mystery of Mrs. Davies' remittance to Holland. Having witnessed his meeting with Fitz in Oxford Street, she gained from him our hero's address, saw the facts of his imprisonment in the papers, and gratitude did the rest.

Having, at the earliest moment, returned the kind visit of Lord M—— at the Admiralty, the latter said he had an opportunity of putting him in acting command of a line-of-battle ship, while her rightful captain was retained on shore, if such an appointment would suit our hero's views.

Having taken, by leave of his lordship, a night to consider the matter, he went home and discussed the subject with Lady Fitzjohn, during the family-affair interregnum of dessert.

The only points for Gentleman Jack's consideration were his two suits of love and law. All the present discussion,

therefore, turned on these—not as to which was the most pleasant, because every one knows that the *latter* is by far the most delightful, speedy, and inexpensive of the two—no, our friends merely discussed what steps were necessary in each. With regard to the tender suit, which Byron assures us never can be tough, Fitz knew that the lady of his love was still living in retirement, and in deep mourning; inclination, therefore, as well as policy, dictated that he should not intrude in that quarter; while, as to the lawyers, they knew that plenty of money was forthcoming, and being moderate people they desired nothing more.

Our hero's noble father had nobly given instructions for the most noble opposition, and then taken himself off to Ireland, while the two solicitors on either side had declared over a bottle of old port, that it was the most "splendid case" they had had for some time, thereby clearly meaning that it would be some time before any one should have it in their power to say—they had done with it. All these interesting points, therefore, viewed *seriatim*, determined our hero to accept the offer of the first lord, which he did on the following morning in person.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE first lord having given to Fitzjohn a letter, introducing him to the gallant officer of whose ship he was temporarily to take the command, our hero promised to leave London on the following morning for Portsmouth, the seaport where the man-of-war in question was then lying.

The name of this said ship we shall give as the Magnificent, of seventy-four guns, commanded by an honourable and gallant viscount, who represented in parliament the important constituency of Snugborough, in the franchise of which, some eighty years since, had been included no less than fourteen souls. But time, which evaporates everything, had reduced these tenures down to three, a trust for the vast responsibility of which, the calibre of the honourable viscount's mind was, I must say, most peculiarly fitted.

His lordship had been originally born the *second* son of the Earl of Ubiquity, and consequently came into the world as the honourable Nobody Nothing. In this cha-

racter he was, as all his family said, very appropriately sent to sea. Soon after he had been posted for losing his brig in smooth water, near the island of Sapienza, in the Mediterranean, his elder brother was good enough to die, in order, as our gallant officer asserted, to make way for one far more likely to do justice to the family honours. By this demise, the honourable Nobody Nothing became the right honourable Viscount Everybody.

The large constituency of Snugborough, awaking from the long dormancy of their lethargic stupor, at once perceived how great a senator they had hitherto failed to discover in the gallant viscount. By way, therefore, of making instant amends to his abilities and their own judgment, they at once returned him to sit for them in parliament, by an overwhelming majority of—one.

Feeling, with the intuitive sagacity of another aquatic animal, how precisely this was his own sphere, the noble and gallant member for Snugborough rose on the third night after taking his seat; and being one of those who, by some infallible accident, always happen to catch the speaker's eye, the gallant viscount, mindful that brevity is the soul of wit, thus replied to one of the leading members.

"Mr. Speaker, when I hear such things as are said by the honourable gentleman opposite, I cannot sit still—and sir, I will tell you the reason. The forms of this house are *so hard*"—[Here he paused, and a general roar of laughter convulsed his auditory; he, never seeing the joke, got angry,] "I say, sir," with great vehemence, "the forms of this house *are so hard*"—[Renewed laughter]—"that a member must sit a long while in this house before he gets used to them."—[Here the din was immense.]—"Honourable members may laugh, if they please, but I *will* speak to the point; and really, Mr. Speaker, it is a point on which I feel most excessively sore,—” Here his lordship's friends laid hold of his coat and had him down amongst them, nor, when his rage had subsided, did he ever attempt to speak to a point of form again.

He had said enough, however, to convince the ministry of his merit, and they, remembering how he had dared the elements in his last vessel, now gave him the Magnificent, as his new one. But on their part, they still wanted him to swell their majority in the Commons, and he on his, was

equally anxious to be spared the disagreeables of a winter's cruising. Fitzjohn was made acting dickey into his Majesty's ship *Magnificent*, with this understanding, that if the *officers* and *ship's company* were quite *satisfied* with him, Lord Ubiquity, the captain's father, who, as a representative peer of Scotland, had a seat in the Upper House, would use his influence to get Fitzjohn a frigate.

There is perhaps no situation in the British navy so little to be envied, as that of being an acting captain in the ship of what is generally understood to be a man of influence. The fag of winter cruising, and the great caution necessary to be used lest you should be *displeasing* to any of the great man's officers, whom he selects and displaces at pleasure, together with the constant sense of diffidence produced by this and many of the other minor miseries of the position, render it altogether one to be once experienced, but never twice tried.

Fitzjohn, having arrived at the George Inn, Portsmouth, on the evening of the day on which he left town, here found that the gallant viscount, for whom he had a letter, was staying at the same hotel. Having taken breakfast on the following morning, as well as a good long walk to South Sea Castle, he returned, and made inquiry for his lordship. He was now informed by his lordship's servant in livery, that his card should be taken by my lord's French valet, who would give it to his master as soon as he was awake. Upon demanding at what hour it was probable that this great event might happen, he was informed that, *except* on court-martial days, my lord never awoke until *one*.

Fitz, hereupon, went his way greatly impressed, took stroll the second, and about two P.M. called again. He had the extreme good fortune to find the viscount just arisen, and seated on a comfortable sofa in the best drawing-room in the house. The gallant officer was covered with an elegant sort of quilted dark-blue silk dressing-gown, looping over the chest, with gold frogs and tassels, and having a most preposterous *pair* of loops on the shoulders, where his epaulettes might be shipped if required. On his head the hereditary legislator, that was to be, wore a silk cap to match his robe, with a broad gold band. In the room, standing before him, was an elderly, respectable man, who proved to be the doctor of the *Magnificent*, with whom the

other was in deep debate. When our hero made his appearance, for some minutes the viscount affected not to see him, going on with his conversation with the surgeon, while Fitzjohn walked to the window, and, determined to show equal nonchalance, threw it up and put his head out.

"Doctor," Fitz heard the viscount say, "you must get me off that vile court-martial to-morrow: I can't possibly get up at nine;—I have applied for an acting captain; if he joins to-day he must go, but if not, 'pon honour, doctor, I must leave it to you to take care I am not wanted." The doctor, whose name was Simpson, replied,—"But I do not know what to say is the matter with your lordship: besides, the admiral, who is very particular, sometimes puts me to my oath."

"Devil take him and his oath too. I know the old brute. Because he came in at the hawse holes, as he calls it, he always tries to throw difficulties in a gentleman's way. You must swear to something, doctor, that's the fact, and, 'pon honour, you may make your conscience easy as to what you say; it is just the same to me. Confusion! what with gales of wind, court-martials, and hospital surveys, I have not a moment to myself, and lead the life of a perfect slave; and more than that, those stupid lords of the Admiralty have never sent down the answer to my leave by telegraph, and I shall be obliged to wait the return of post. But," eyeing the card of Fitzjohn, "there is a person waiting to see me somewhere; I must ring for Trompignon, and know where he is."

The bell was rung, Trompignon came, the question asked in French and in the same language answered by the valet, who pointed to the window where Fitzjohn was still lounging. This must truly have been great information to the viscount, who had desired him to be admitted in the first instance, and since purposely carried on his conversation in a key that could not escape the ears of his visitor—but this was the man.

Seeing that Fitzjohn did not attempt to turn round, or take any notice of him, his lordship coughed—Fitz began to whistle. "Captain What's your name," began his lordship, getting very angry. But no one answered to this distinction, so, finding he had fairly got his match, my lord

advanced two steps forward, and condescended to pronounce the name of Fitzjohn.

Gentleman Jack turned round, and making the viscount one of his best bows, presented the Admiralty letter. "Upon my honour I'm very glad to see you," said his lordship, after reading the epistle through, and, extending his hand at the same moment, he shook our hero so heartily, as to do away with a great deal of the prejudice which his fopperies had at first excited.

"This letter, sir," resumed the other, after a pause, "does you such honour, and Lord M—— speaks so highly of your nautical abilities, and recommends you so strongly to me, that I have great pleasure in at once appointing you acting captain in *my* ship—if you think the thing will suit you. By-the-way, have you breakfasted? Yes, you have. Ah, good, early habits! The House, Captain Fitzjohn, the House, has ruined me in that respect. Well, as I was going to say, I think *my* appointment will suit you until parliament breaks up, and the winter is over; and as I *don't* like *my* ship's company to be kept off that cursed cold station the Black Rocks, I shall have the Magnificent ordered upon the Cadiz Station, under Sir John Ord, where you will be devilish comfortable, you know, all the winter. By-the-bye, Mr. Acting Captain—I beg your pardon, Fitz—Fitz—Fitzjohn, you must attend the court-martial to-morrow. But I must introduce you to *my* doctor. Captain Fitzjohn, Dr. Simpson—Dr. Simpson, Captain Fitzjohn. You will find the doctor a tolerable good fellow—rather squeamish at taking an oath. But the sick list I manage myself, that is to say, I limit it to ten in the summer and thirteen in the winter—don't I, doctor?"—"O, yes, my lord," replied the subservient doctor.

"I intend to make him physician of the fleet one of these days; and nothing will recommend him in times of economy, so much as a small expense of medicine; those that die, nobody troubles their heads about, for we bury at a very low figure, you know, at sea; but the Sick and Hurt Board very prudently examine into the expense of every scruple of jalap; but this confounded court-martial to-morrow annoys me. How shall we manage that? Have you got your commission yet, Captain Fitzjohn?"

"No, my lord," replied our hero; "the admiral's secre-

tary requested me to call on you, and after that he said it could be made out."

"He is a devilish sly old fox, is that Pounce, the admiral's secretary; therefore you and I will talk over our affairs deliberately. I like to have *my* ship's company managed in *my* own way, and by-the-way, I'll just, while I think of it, send my doctor over to the secretary. Doctor, just step over to the admiral's secretary, and tell him to make my compliments to the port-admiral, and say that I wish to have a blank acting commission, signed, and sent over directly for *my* ship, and I'll fill it up in the course of the day, and see him on the subject before the muster for the court-martial to-morrow.

As soon as the doctor had departed on this errand, the noble skipper rang the bell, and told the footman to order the britchska with the grey horses to be ready at half-past three, to take him down to Common Hard, as he must go across Gosport; and to have the chariot ready at five, to drive him to the admiral's to dinner, after which the servant was told to summon also the captain's valet and factotum, Trompignon. This obsequious nuisance was sent with a most submissive message from his master to a Mademoiselle Flore, begging that the latter would allow his lordship and a friend to pay their respects to her that evening at supper—which supper, by-the-way, was to be laid for six, with the rightful concomitant of iced champagne. After Trompignon had been sent off with this verbal despatch some half-dozen times, and as often rung back, he was finally dismissed, with orders to tell Mademoiselle Flore, in addition to the above, that she was to take the noble captain's dog, Ponto, out in the carriage with herself for an airing, and array her lovely person in blue of some sort, for the evening.

Fitz now began to wonder who Mademoiselle Flore might be, but he soon learnt that his brother officer, not thinking apartments at the George sufficiently expensive, maintained a small establishment in a more retired quarter, Mademoiselle Flore being kind enough to do the honours during those brief intervals which the viscount was able to snatch from his slave's life, to seek smiles without sincerity, and favour devoid of affection.

Before finally going off to Mademoiselle Flore, Trompignon went into his master's bed-room to take down his dog

and get him washed, ready for an airing in the carriage; but the snarling of Ponto soon occasioned the captain to open the door which separated his chamber from his sitting-room, and Ponto was discovered hull down between the captain's sheets, and only his head out of the bed-clothes, snarling at Trompignon.

"Venez donc, venez donc, mon petit," cried the viscount, "tu as besoin d'un petit morceau de sucre, pauvre animal! My plague of a doctor coming with his sick report, quite put the poor dog's breakfast out of my head. He really must have some breakfast—What shall I do? Why doesn't that rascal Thomas come? Trompignon must have told him that poor Ponto wants washing. Captain Fitzjohn, will you oblige me by ringing the bell?"

Fitz complied with this request in a manner that threatened the existence of the bell-rope, and thinking the gallant officer more attentive to his dog than his duty, asked how he was to understand his wishes, with respect to the said court-martial on the next morning.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, say no more of it—it makes me sick, faint, ill beyond description; how can it be expected of me, who have so much to think of, that I can rise and actually have finished breakfast in time to get on board the *Gladiator*" (the name of the ship in which court-martials were held) "by nine o'clock? Only fancy, because I happened to be late the other morning, that cursed admiral (old Howgood) kept firing minute guns, and then threatened to write to the Admiralty, to have the value of the powder charged against my half-pay—d——n him—positively I say, for in these times I take it they wouldn't have thought much of doing so, and putting the amount on the credit side against the national debt—or some other thing—in the annual report of increase of revenue."

At this moment the livery servant entered. "Do you want me, sir?" said Thomas.

"Yes, and be d——d to you," replied the viscount, "I have wanted you this half-hour. Take Ponto and wash him well in milk-and-water, ready to go out airing with his mistress in the carriage. Take care he doesn't take cold, and when he is well dry lay him on my bed, and cover him up with my number two boat cloak, the one which is lined with white silk; but see that it is well aired first. By-the-

bye, poor Ponto has had no breakfast. Do you know, Captain Fitzjohn, whether it is better to bathe the "*pauvre chien*" before or after eating? I have heard it is dangerous to bathe on a full stomach. I wonder where *my* confounded doctor is! he's always out of the way when he's wanted. At this juncture in came the doctor, and "Pounce," the admiral's secretary.

The latter, considering himself senior officer, came first into the room, and handing out a sheet of foolscap, well filled with writing, said to the honourable captain, "I have brought, sir, the acting commission, ready signed, with the commander-in-chief's compliments."

"Oh!—ah!—Very good, Mr. Secretary," replied the noble captain; then turning to Pounce, "warm milk and water, because I must answer, the commander-in-chief's in such a d—d hurry, and *my* doctor has just been three hours stepping over two gutters. I say, Mr. Simpson, I want to know if Ponto should be washed before breakfast, or on a full stomach."

"The safest plan," says the doctor, patting the "*pauvre chien*" on the head, who kept snarling all the time, "is most certainly on an empty stomach, because——"

"Ah! you may spare me the reason, I never was fond of that. There, Thomas, take him down, use him kindly; and, doctor, will you be so good as to stand by the tub whilst he is washing? I know you're a capital dog-doctor."

Simpson made no reply to this last speech; for fearing to offend the great man, he put up with endless indignities; being all the while rightly destined never to reap the reward which prompted a man of liberal education to abase himself before a creature that had none. As soon as the doctor had departed on this menial duty, his captain said, "You see, Captain Fitzjohn, how I discipline *my* doctor. It's just the same with *my* lieutenants, *my* master, *my* marine officers, *my* mids, and all *my* crew, they're all in devilish good kelter, I can assure you." Then turning to Pounce, "Well, Mr. Secretary, now for you—*chacun à son tour*, as Flore says."

"Well, my lord, the admiral hopes that the officer you select as acting captain will meet your views, and that the service won't suffer *much* by *your* absence, during your attendance upon your parliamentary duties. My lady would

also thank you to spare her two or three franks for to-day, if you are not full; and hopes, as well as her two daughters, that they will have the pleasure of your company, at the admiral's dinner-table to-day."

"My compliments to them, Mr. Secretary, and I think they will, *if* I have nothing better to do—so they may as well keep a place for me; and as for the letters, I'll frank them if I have time—at any rate they shall go to-morrow; but now for the commission. By-the-bye, I must introduce you, Gentlemen—Captain Fitzjohn, Mr. Pounce; Mr. Pounce, Captain Fitzjohn—a deuced good, worthy fellow, this secretary; always provided that you make him prize-agent, as I've done; and *en passant*, I should wish you to continue it whilst you temporarily command *my* ship; they are all d—d rogues, you know, Sec—but still it is as well to be robbed by a fellow that *can* do you some good on a pinch, eh? Billy the admiral lets you do almost as you please, don't he, Pounce?"

"Why, it *is* true," said Pounce, "that I *can* give a ship a good cruise now and then."

"Yes, by Jove, but you always pick these out for the ships whose prize-agent you are. I remember you tried to Black-Rock me once, but then I wasn't M.P., or eldest son either."

"Oh, my lord, M.P.'s are too valuable members of the senate to risk their precious lives in such villanous places."

"Aye, aye, Mr. Secretary, that's all very well now, but I remember when the case was different. However, Captain Fitzjohn and myself have not had time to talk over what he is to do with *my* ship during my absence; therefore, you and I will step over to the admiral, whom I wish to see; and if Captain Fitzjohn will do me the favour of waiting until my return, we can talk over the bar-kee afterwards." To this Fitzjohn assented, and the worthy pair vanished.

As soon as they were gone, and housed in the admiral's office, which was just opposite, Fitzjohn observed Dr. Simpson walk out also, and going into the bed-room of the honourable captain, the window of which was open, he looked out and beheld Thomas washing Ponto under the window, in a large tub of milk and water.

"I like you very much, Ponto," said Thomas, as the dog's hind legs stood in the tub, and his fore paws rested

on its edge, his red tongue going in and out between his teeth; "and I say, Mr. Ponto, I should like you much better, if you was not so plaguy genteel, to be washed every day; once a week I should think quite enough for you, but hang it, every day is too much, though they do say that every dog has his day, and a dog's wife two Sundays. Well, I suppose as how I shall have mine some time or other."

As soon as Ponto was washed and dried, Thomas brought him up-stairs, and was in the act of putting him in between the viscount's sheets, when he himself entered the drawing-room.

"What are you about there, you son of a sea-cook?" cried his lordship.—"I am putting Ponto to bed, sir, as you ordered."

"Has the poor animal had any breakfast yet?"—"No, your honour," replied Thomas.

"Then ring the bell for some this instant, you scoundrel; ring violently." And Thomas did as he was bid; and on the waiter presenting himself, the noble officer demanded, "What have you got cold in the house, that my poor dog can breakfast on, waiter?"

"Why, my lord, there's cold chicken, and cold roast beef, and a cold turkey."

"Bring up the cold chicken, then, and a piece of beef under-done; and tell the cook to grill the two legs of the turkey, but to put no pepper or salt on them; and take care, sir, that he's not long about it."

As soon as the waiter had disappeared, a slight tap was heard at the drawing-room door, and the permission of "come in" having been given, a half-drowned-looking mid made his appearance with the weekly account to be signed. "The first lieutenant, my lord," said the mid, "has desired me to bring the weekly account for you to sign to-day, fearing your lordship might be too much indisposed to sign it to-morrow at the court-martial."

The viscount took the account, and on looking it over came to the column where the supernumeraries were marked—forty-seven in number.

"Curse the purser!" cried the captain; "I told him I wouldn't have them mentioned; the Admiralty will see their number now, and order them into another ship, and leave the Magnificent only half-manned. However, I'll go and

settle it with the admiral's secretary." The refreshments, or rather breakfast, for Ponto, entering just as his master had put on his cocked hat, he thus addressed himself to the middy, who was a boatswain's son, and therefore always kept for fetching on board the ship's company's beef, and any other disagreeable service, in *bad and rainy weather*.

"Now, Mr. Rough-and-Tough," quoth his lordship, "you may employ yourself in giving my dog Ponto his breakfast, but don't let him eat too fast."

Fitzjohn being in mufti, the middy did not know who he was; and as he sat by the fire reading the newspaper, which totally hid his face, Rough-and-Tough thought he was quite unobserved.

"*Mille pardons*," cried the viscount, waving his hand to Fitzjohn as he went out at the door. The dog was seated by a chair close to the midshipman and the tray. One smoking leg of the turkey being divided, Ponto seemed to select the thigh part; but the mid, who had during the last four hours been pulling in from St. Helen's, and appeared more hungry than the dog, took the drum-stick in his fingers, and after biting the fleshy part clean from the bone, thrust the poor remainder into the dog's mouth, dipping his own portion into the salt as he ate, and beating the poor dog hollow in voracity.

Ponto, seeing that his new acquaintance very strangely discharged the office of feeder towards him, was mightily inclined to help himself from the dish, as he was used to do. The middy, however, whose delicacy was quite shocked at such a proof of bad breeding, gave him a *reminder*, by a good thump across the nose with the thigh bone, remarking, *sotto voce*, at the same time, "Come, sir, I think beef's quite good enough for you, so I'll finish the other thigh of the turkey. Accordingly, setting the dish of under-done beef before Ponto, while he cleaned the other bones of the turkey, the whole edible stock of the table was most quickly cleared. The viscount by this time returning, Rough-and-Tough no sooner heard his lordship's footsteps on the stairs, than he, in technical phrase, shoved off his boat, by pushing his chair stern foremost from the table.

"*As-tu bien mangé?*" quoth the viscount to Ponto; "how deuced hungry he must have been, to have finished the thighs of the turkey and nearly all the beef!" The

middy contented himself with saying, "Very, my lord," and quickly snatching up his hat, went on board as speedily as possible.

"I have a thousand apologies to offer you, Captain Fitzjohn," said my lord; "but I have got into such bad habits of being late, owing to my being constantly obliged to sit in that confounded hot House of Commons, until the minister has done with me, that I can't get into those regular and early habits which my duties as a captain of a man-of-war require I should do. But to the point of how I wish you to command *my* ship during my absence—I am very anxious to have *my* vessel kept in strict discipline; but as all *my* officers, and particularly *my* midshipmen, are gentlemen in every sense of the word, and the youngsters are all of the first families, I am very anxious that no vulgar persons should be introduced amongst them; you will therefore be kind enough, on the first opportunity, to get rid of Mr. Rough-and-Tough, whom you saw here feeding Ponto; for as he is actually the son of a boatswain: this step, you see, is indispensable; all my other lads are unexceptionable, and sure of their promotion; and amongst other requests I have to make of you, is this—not to waste or throw away their lives in these horrible cutting-out expeditions, or in fighting stone walls,—except Rough-and-Tough by-the-bye, you may expend him—for be assured, no good to our country can arise from it. I take the liberty of requiring from you a promise to this effect, as I understand you have got the name in our service of a fire-eater; and then as to punishment, if you would have the goodness to drop me a line when you consider a man deserves to be flogged, I will let you know my *wish* by return of post."

"Why really, my lord," replied Fitzjohn, scarcely able to keep a grave countenance, "if these promises are to be exacted from me, I would prefer declining such a command altogether. As to punishment, I consider it much more humane to give a man a good flogging, than to keep him in irons during the long cruises we are accustomed to make at this period of the war, when his spirit is broken, and himself in the end tried by a court-martial, which, perhaps, sentences his going through the fleet. And as for the stone walls and the boat-work, which you mention, I greatly fear that if I become acting captain of the *Magnificent*,

these matters must be left to my own discretion. I believe I am reckoned incapable of throwing away men's lives, in any enterprises which cannot be useful to our country."

"Well, well, then, since you are unwilling to be strictly pledged, I will not insist on it; but I am sure you will attend to my wishes, and I hope to place you in the command of a good frigate on your return. My father is a Scotch peer, and you know Scotch interest is paramount with the first lord."

"Let it be clearly understood between your lordship and myself, that I go on board with my hands quite unfettered; I am, like the rest of us, my lord, responsible, you know, to the articles of war."

"Very well, then, so let it be; but tell me, can you attend that confounded court-martial to-morrow? You will oblige me by doing so, Captain Fitzjohn, and I shall leave *my* steward on board, and all that is in the store-room is quite at your service; I know that most young officers of your service have had more hard blows than cash, and I must insist upon your considering yourself *my* guest, and sitting at the head of *my* table during my absence."

Fitzjohn here heartily thanked the viscount, for what he saw was a sterling instance of generosity; but having not the least occasion to put himself under any obligation, he declined it, assuring his lordship that he intended proposing himself as a member of the ward-room mess, for the time he should hold his temporary command.

The commission was then filled up, and the noble officer wishing to get rid of a long row to St. Helen's, to accompany Fitzjohn and hear it read on board the Magnificent, pretended a thousand engagements, besides the fact of being obliged to dine with the commander-in-chief. So Fitzjohn got away, and proceeded alone to the ship, having promised to sup with the viscount and Mademoiselle Flore at midnight.

As the tide was against him, Fitzjohn was obliged to pull up in the ship's wake; and on nearing her counter, he heard the middies out of the gun-room ports exclaim to one another, "I say, my boys, here comes our acting Dickey, let's have a squint at his figure-head."

The commission being read, and himself introduced to all the officers by the first lieutenant, Fitzjohn gave them

to understand, that he should interfere as little as possible with the regulations of the proper captain, provided he found the ship's duty well discharged, and proper attention paid to the naval instructions.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE court-martial having assembled at the usual hour, and pronounced its sentence, after three hours' sitting, the Magnificent was, on the next morning, ordered off to join the blockading Cadiz fleet. As the officers of the ward-room had consented to receive Fitzjohn into their mess, he was spared all the trouble resulting from the more usual arrangement of messing alone. The day after getting to sea, he invited the officers into the cabin, to inform them of his plan of carrying on the duty, instead of haranguing them on the quarter-deck, in the presence of the ship's company, a practice which can only tend to detract from the respect due to their authority.

"Now, gentlemen," said Fitzjohn, addressing himself to the commissioned officers, "I wish the duty of the ship to be carried on in the way to which you have been accustomed under his lordship, for whom I am acting. The naval instructions, and the articles of war, form the best order-book for your guidance. For receiving me into your mess I feel myself obliged to you. I hope you will find me the messmate below, but I shall always be the captain on the quarter-deck. As for you, young gentlemen," addressing himself to the mates and midshipmen, "I shall never so degrade you, and do so much violence to your proper feelings as gentlemen, as to have you flogged, or endanger your lives by sending you to the mast-head; but I shall desire the first lieutenant to keep a book of complaints against you, and those of whom three complaints are made by a commissioned officer during our cruise from port, shall *not* be allowed leave of absence when we return. I have only to tell all of you, that my cabin and library is open to you from eleven until two, but none of the books are to be taken beyond these doors."

General satisfaction attended these arrangements, and during the sixteen months that Fitzjohn remained acting

Dickey, no instance of any undue familiarity or act of insubordination arose from this source, excepting one of little moment that fell out as follows.

The lieutenant of the fore-castle having endangered the fore-yard of the ship by neglecting to see the foretop-bowline let go, when bracing round the head-yards in tacking, Fitzjohn felt it his duty to reprove him for it on the quarter-deck. At the dinner-table, Fitzjohn asked him to take wine, as he had done others, upon which the lieutenant, turned down his wine-glass, and bowing, declined.

"I am afraid, Lieutenant ——," said Gentleman Jack, "that you are still thinking of the foretop-bowline. But if you intend to bring the quarter-deck down to our mess-table, you had better retire to your cabin."

The officer hesitated a moment whether he should take this broad hint of being placed under arrest or not; but the whole mess, viewing the matter with Fitzjohn's eyes, one of them turned up his glass, and another filled it with wine, when his own sense suggested that only one wise course was left for him to adopt, that of pledging his superior, which he did with the best grace in his power, and all went on as before.

As the officers and middies of the *Magnificent*, from their gentlemanly comportment and good style of dress, were nicknamed the "Dandy Fly-flappers," Fitzjohn was not sorry when an opportunity soon offered of showing the fleet that their hearts lay in the right place. An outward-bound French letter of marque West Indiaman was lying snugly moored with chains to the shore, under a heavy battery in a certain bay on the coast of Spain. Her captain had been selected for his well-tried bravery. He was a dark mulatto, French St. Domingo man. The *Zoe* was the name of his vessel; she mounted sixteen long nine-pounders, and was manned with a crew of one hundred and twenty-seven men, many of them powerful West India mulattos. They were all armed with short stabbing-knives besides the usual weapons supplied to seamen for their personal defence, and the hatches were battened down every night, so as to render escape from the deck quite impossible. In addition to this the boarding-nettings were triced up to the yard-arms, and every precaution taken to prevent surprise.

Fitzjohn was ordered with two sloops of war to cruise off this port, and having well reconnoitred the position of this vessel, and notwithstanding the recommendation of the honourable viscount in St. Stephen's chapel, he thought it would be as well to prove that gentlemanly deported and well-dressed officers were quite equal in point of courage to the cursing, swearing bully, out of whose mouth there scarcely ever issues anything but the most blasphemous oaths.

Amongst the very many middies of the *Magnificent*, was one whom the rest had nicknamed "Lavender Bobby," because he always sported a clean pocket-handkerchief, and very generally some of the scent so named. As soon as the cutting-out expedition had been decidedly fixed, the volunteers of all classes were so numerous, that it was necessary to draw lots for the officers who were to go on this most hazardous service, the first and fourth lieutenants being the only ones named by Fitzjohn. "Lavender Bobby" was one of the candidates fortunately drawn. The small vessels of the squadron having furnished their quota of boats, officers, and men, the whole stood in after dark, and anchored under the lee of a small island at the entrance of the harbour, or bay, in which the *Zoe* was moored. Every precaution of muffled oars, &c., was taken to ensure success; the twelve boats were divided into four divisions, and one boat was allotted to the particular duty of cutting the cable, which being done, the crew were, if possible, to get on the bowsprit and hoist the jib. For this duty "Lavender Bobby's boat" was selected by the commanding lieutenant, and there being a misty rain, and the wind off the land, the night was particularly favourable for the attempt in hand.

The boats pulled in with the greatest silence, but the Frenchman was not to be caught off his guard, and showers of grape and cannister saluted the assailants before they could get alongside. The British officers and seamen, however, boarded with an impetuosity that nothing could resist. "Lavender Bobby" succeeded in quickly cutting the cable, and, mounting the bowsprit with six of his men, found the jib-halyards had been rounded up to the block through which they were led to the fore-topmast head.

Bobby, on seeing this, lost not a minute in mounting to

the mast-head, leaving his men below, and returning by the foretop-mast stay, with the jib-halyards hitched round his body, the jib was soon hoisted, to the great surprise and consternation of the French captain and his crew.

As soon as this piece of good service was performed, "Lavender Bobby," dirk in hand, flew aft, where he saw the commanding lieutenant, closely engaged with the French captain, who seemed likely to have the best of it. But this matter was soon decided the other way, by Bobby having lent the length of his dirk to the Frenchman's loins, when the loss of their captain so disheartened his crew, that the vessel was carried, amidst a tremendous slaughter.

As soon as the decks were secured, the first object was to get the *Zoe* from under the fire of the batteries; but it was quickly discovered that chains entered through the bow and breast-ports, and being clenched round the fore and main-masts with rivets, secured her to the shore.

Meanwhile Fitzjohn, with a laudable anxiety to check the undaunted courage of the officers, who too often blindly rush on destruction, without calculating the dangers to be encountered, had quietly followed his boats, unknown to any of them, in the *Magnificent's* barge; seeing that the fire had ceased from the *Zoe*, he naturally concluded how the battle had terminated, and pulled up alongside of her at the moment of the dilemma I have mentioned.

To storm the batteries was quite impossible, yet the difficulty was, how to avoid their fire. He therefore ordered some of the boats to keep a small distance from the vessel, and to continue firing blank cartridges from their muskets and pistols, as if the *Zoe's* crew still defended their vessel, while others on the *Zoe's* deck kept up a similar fire, as if at the boats. This manœuvre had the desired effect, and prevented the batteries from opening on the captured ship; during this time all hands were employed in rowing in upon the chains. In doing this it was fortunately discovered that the chains not being long enough, the enemy had been obliged to clench cables to their ends to reach the batteries. The difficulty now vanished. The cables were quickly cut, and the vessel soon out of reach of the enemy's cannon.

The prize subsequently proved to be a very fine craft, and

for her capture the senior lieutenant was promoted to the rank of commander, and Lavender Bobby made lieutenant, as soon as he had served his time, and passed his examination. As it chanced to be at night that the Magnificent rejoined the commander-in-chief, a lieutenant, who was rowing guard, and had heard of some sanguinary action having been fought, paused under her counter, after hailing, and began to ask what *vacancies* had occurred, and learn the news.

"So," said he, "you Magnificents have had a lark with a French privateer, we hear."—"Yes," replied the officer of the watch, "we have."

"I hope," quoth the guardo, "that your *captain* isn't killed; though," added he, "I suppose not, as skippers know better than to venture their precious persons on these occasions; and at any rate as he is only an acting Dickey, it wouldn't do us much good on board the flagship."—"O no," returned he of the watch; "so far from being killed, he is alive and kicking."

"And listening to you too, my boy," thought Fitzjohn, who heard the whole of this dialogue from his cabin-window.

"How many lieutenants, then, have you slipped off the hooks?" inquired a post-midshipman, who sat behind the lieutenant of the guard-boat in the stern sheets.—"Only one, and another wounded," replied the officer of the watch.

"Do you think *he* will recover?" demanded the disinterested inquirer.—"I don't know," was the answer; "the doctor has not much hopes of him."

"Well, then, there will be some luck at last, if he dies. That will just bring me in for his shoes, as I am second on the admiral's list. Any other officers killed?"—"Only a jolly lieutenant of marines."

"Ah, that's no sort of consequence. *He* might just as well have lived. None of those poor devils get promotion under any circumstances, as there are always plenty of them in store at the barracks. Good night."—"Good night," said each, and the delicate interchange of thoughts was at an end.

The coveted vacancies of officers were soon filled up from among the *expectants* on board the commander-in-chief's

ship, and the supernumeraries completed the crew in the weekly account.

CHAPTER LXVII.

AFTER cruising a few weeks longer on this station, the *Magnificent* was ordered to England by the express desire of her noble captain, who was afraid Fitzjohn might *expend* too many of the rising generation of the naval aristocracy; and this being the case, the commander-in-chief desired Fitzjohn, on his way home, to proceed to the port of ———, to demand and obtain satisfaction from the governor, for oppressive conduct against British commerce.

On the third day of his departure from the fleet, Fitzjohn arrived at the port in question, and having cleared his ship for action, and bent cables to the spare and sheet anchors through the stern ports, he went into the harbour under easy sail, and brought up the *Magnificent* within half-pistol shot of the principal battery which protected the town.

The lower-deck ports were now opened, the guns run out with the tomkins withdrawn, and a long-faced, cool-looking lieutenant was despatched with the following letter to the governor:—

SIR,—Repeated acts of oppression and injustice having been reported to the commander-in-chief of the British fleet, cruising off Cadiz, to have been exercised by you on the property of the British merchants residing in the town of ———, and following their peaceable commercial pursuits, under the good faith of treaties made between our two countries, I have been directed by the commander-in-chief to proceed here to demand immediate redress.

“I am, sir, as you behave,

“Yours, &c.,

“A. FITZJOHN,

“Capt. H.M.S. *Magnificent*.”

The governor's answer being received, was found, after detailing a variety of extracts of correspondence, amounting to two or three pages, to conclude as follows:—

“And I propose, for the consideration of his excellency,

the commander of the British man-of-war, now at anchor in the port of ———, that we refer the subject in question to be discussed by the ambassadors, at present at the court of ———, so that in about three weeks we may hope to bring these differences to an amicable and just arrangement.

“J’ai l’honneur de vous saluer,

“Avec la plus haute consideration,

“Votre serviteur, très obeissant,

&c., &c., &c.,

“HUMBUG,

“Comte de l’Empire, Gouverneur.

“P.S. As the inhabitants are rather alarmed at seeing a British man-of-war so near the citadel and town, the commandant of the ship is requested to move *further off, as soon as possible.*”

Observing some of his excellency’s artillery busy about the guns of the citadel, Fitzjohn hastened to despatch the following reply:—

“EXCELLENCY,—I don’t come here to lose valuable time in useless *parliamentaries* and ridiculous compliments. I come here to demand redress for injuries done the commerce and the subjects of the King, my master.

“At the expiration of one hour from the time I hoist a red flag at the foretop-gallant mast-head, if I have not an assurance from the British consul that all differences are settled justly, and to his satisfaction, I have some ‘ambassadors’ upon my lower deck, which will speak a language—*that is never misunderstood.*

“Believe me in earnest,

“And, as you behave,

“Your friend or enemy,

“A. FITZJOHN,

“Capt. H.M.S. Magnificent.”

Fitzjohn despatched the same dry-looking lieutenant with this second dose, desiring him not to fail to impress upon *son Excellence* his captain’s habits of decision; and with him went Lavender Bobby, who was to hold up his cap on the ramparts when the governor and council were assembled. Fitzjohn for these good people had prepared a little treat, by taking care that one of the lower-deck guns

should be *unshotted*, but well charged, treble wadded, and rammed home. The muzzle of this piece was then elevated as high as the upper port sill would allow, and the gun trained in the direction of the governor's council chamber.

As soon as Lavender Bobby held aloft his cap from the rampart, up went the red flag, and bang went the lower-deck gun, to the great consternation of his excellency and council. The lieutenant and British consul being called, as was expected, to attend the conference, nothing could exceed the ludicrous description which they afterwards gave of the effect produced by firing the gun.

The lieutenant, who was a dry wag in his way, looking calmly out of the window, gave them to understand, that it was merely one of the small calibre guns, to point out that the hour had commenced, and that the red flag was hoisted.

The French consul, who was also present, hereupon observed, "O by Gar! if dat be hee's leetel forecastle gun, vat must be his grand cannon on de lower batterie?"

In vain the governor protested, that one hour was not long enough to draw up the articles of the convention, and that he could not sign anything without the concurrence of the *consul* of his ally, *Le Grand Empereur de la France*.

All this Fitzjohn had foreseen, and prepared against; the British consul and himself had got all ready cut and dried the articles they had decided on accepting, in triplicates—English, Spanish, and French; and, within the *hour*, off came the treaty duly signed, and down came the red flag.

As the governor could have collected four thousand troops in a few hours, and there were some fifty-six heavy guns in the battery, besides two hulk frigates well-armed, that were lying in the harbour as guard vessels, the commander-in-chief, when Fitzjohn's despatches reached him, wrote back that he thought the affair most admirably *terminated*.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

AND so—praised be Apollo—we have at length arrived at the last chapter! Fair reader, or Grim reader, whichever you may be—if that I still have a reader to whip in with

me to the goal—I doubt not your ready intuition enables you to perceive the finale of my tale—the dreadful catastrophe—the fell and sweeping destruction which engulfs all my characters, and leaves the wretched author alone surviving amid the ruins of his hand.

You see all this, no doubt, and equally without doubt hold with me that this last chapter is unnecessary, superfluous, and idle. Would that I were quite sure of this! For are not the clocks of Middle and Inner Temple. St. Paul's, St. Dunstan's, and St. Bride's—and Lord knows how many saints besides—all striking seven of the morn, cold and bright, of March, in the good year 1837? And am not I faint and weary to get away, and take my "natural rest," now that daylight has put out my tapers, and surprised my vigils. Even so—but I will not cheat "the British public" of a line. Virtuous supporters of the country circulating libraries, your "London correspondent" disdains to rob you of a word.

But be prepared, my good friends, the end *is* coming: and if you did not anticipate it before, just be kind enough to believe that it is approaching now.

Among other good and worshipful fancies of our re-doubted hero Gentleman Jack, was one of always taking upon his own responsibility the navigation of his own ship. As this saved much trouble to his master, Old Deep-sea-lead never objected to it; and, in the present instance, Fitzjohn determined, after leaving the port where he had so well physicked "His Excellency," to see with what degree of neatness he could make the harbour of Plymouth.

The Magnificent had a glorious breeze, fresh and favourable, the whole way home, and so well did her captain manage the end in view, that the first part of our coast which he made, was Eddystone Lighthouse at night.

Running past the beacon, he continued his course, and by midnight was lying at single anchor in the Sound, as he had no relish for a detestably long pull out to the Cawsand Bay for himself or men, some two or three times a day perhaps. This being in the month of May, he was therefore enabled, with greater security, to take his choice with his Majesty's vessel of war, in a spot where there was both plenty of room for driving, and more than the necessary water.

Early on the ensuing morning, a number of boats came

on board, and with the first a whole bundle of letters and newspapers. A letter, directed in a female hieroglyph which he did not recognise, was the first to attract our hero's attention. Having read the letter with considerable surprise, he opened one of the newspapers, and saw marked out for his perusal the following paragraph:—

“EXTRAORDINARY AFFAIR IN HIGH LIFE.—Our readers will remember that, some months since, the marriage of a certain Irish nobleman with an accomplished Yorkshire heiress, was broken off by the supposed discovery that the noble lord was already married. Since that time various paragraphs have gone the rounds of the papers respecting the parties in question; and it has for some time been known, that the injured wife was taking the only sure remedy, not merely to do justice to herself, but to establish the birthright of her only son, a young but distinguished officer in the navy.

“In the progress of this suit, which was soon to have come on before the House of Lords, a most important witness was brought home from abroad, where he had long filled a high official and military appointment. This gallant officer, who is understood to have been one of the most early friends of the noble husband, arrived in London last week, to prove, as it is said, the legitimacy of his lordship's marriage.

“Reports of this nature having reached his lordship's ears, he sought out his early friend, and, as we believe, reproached him with equal bitterness and injustice. A challenge being the inevitable consequence, both parties took the necessary steps for a meeting. His lordship, to guard against interruption, left his own house in Piccadilly, and slept that night, as also did his second, at an hotel in St. James's Street.

“Both these two gentlemen were called at four o'clock the next morning, the meeting being arranged for half-past five, in Holland Park. His lordship's second being dressed the first, went to the door of his noble friend, and unable to obtain any answer to his repeated summonses, at last entered his lordship's chamber. Here he found the unfortunate nobleman lying quite dead, and almost cold, in the easy chair near his bed. The clothes of the couch were turned down, as if to be ready for the occupant; and the

chair was placed close to the fire, as though his lordship had been engaged in thought, and sitting over the embers, before retiring to rest. An inquest was this morning held on the body, and a verdict returned—'Found Dead.' The whole circumstances of the case have, as may well be supposed, created a great sensation in the upper circles. The title of this ancient family now devolves on the gallant naval officer before alluded to, and with whose name his country's gazettes must long since have rendered our readers familiar. His claims to the hereditary honours and estates will not, it is understood, be contested, since there is, at hand, abundant poof of their justice in every way.

The emotion of Fitzjohn, on reading such, and so sudden a disclosure, may be imagined. Though he never had seen the unhappy parent who, for some inexplicable reason, had behaved so coldly towards him, still his bosom was too young for nature to be quite silent within it: and shutting himself within his inner cabin for an hour, he gave himself up to the train of sombre regrets naturally inspired by such a mode of succeeding to fortune and title.

By degrees, as this train of feeling wore off, he began to consider what were the steps which it was now necessary for him to take; and here recurred to him another most singular circumstance which he had quite forgotten.

When our hero first received the letter which pointed to the paragraph, and confirmed its intelligence, he naturally, not knowing the handwriting, looked at the seal. The impression was on black wax. He looked at it again and again. "Surely," said he, "I know that stupid ordinary seal, and something important is connected with it;" but what he could not remember. The fact was, the colour of the wax, connected with the deep marginal mourning of the paper, had so much excited and disturbed him, that he could not fairly collect his mind on any point, until he knew the contents of the letter.

Could his affectionate mother have been taken from him, or Jane——? The thought was agony; so, avoiding the seal, he tore the letter open, and found it had been written by his mother's waiting-woman, at her ladyship's desire.

Now then, when his feelings were less perturbed, he once more examined the impression narrowly. For a few

moments he was still at a loss. Suddenly it flashed upon him. It was the very same seal as that of the note by which was paid into his bankers the large sum necessary for the law-suit. Here then was mystery still more mystified. How could a servant, or one little above that rank, have been instrumental in such an act? She never, surely, could have saved that money—it was not possible. And even if she had, much as she loved her mistress, was it possible that she could have acted so noble and disinterested a part? Yet the thing looked absurd upon the face of it.

He knew not what to think. But one thing was evident, namely, that he must hasten to town without delay. Having given the necessary orders for packing a portmanteau, he lost no time in rigging, to present himself before the port-admiral, and obtain the necessary leave.

Just as Fitzjohn was going over the side to descend into his barge, who should make his appearance on the quarter-deck but Jim Bell. The meeting between the friends was not more opportune than it was agreeable. Jim got into our hero's barge, and as they rowed ashore together, learnt with surprise all that had happened.

It may be supposed that Bell was easily persuaded to accompany Fitzjohn to London, for, independent of their mutual delight at being together, Jim's brig had only been paid off a week or ten days before, and without a ship he was, if alone, a fish most completely dis-elemented.

Gentleman Jack, having procured the leave of absence he required, took a post-chaise and four, and our two old messmates thus rolled on towards town together. As Fitzjohn's letters and papers had been waiting for him some days before his arrival, he knew that his mother must be aware that his return to England was expected, and he rightly concluded that she had learnt this from the gallant and indefatigable viscount, whose apprehensions had recalled him to his home. Under these circumstances, Fitz had no hesitation in driving direct to his mother's door, which, for fear of any unfortunate surprise, he would not otherwise have done.

The joy and delight with which they rushed into each other's arms did, indeed, prove some recompense for all they had gone through, to experience that moment; and so bright and fervent was the appearance as well as the reality

of that affection which linked their hearts together, that it brought tears into the eyes of one who stood by, and was as yet an unobserved witness of the scene ; but she did not remain so long.

After the few first deeply-absorbed seconds, Fitzjohn's eye perceived that a third party, a lady, was in the room. Like his mother, she was dressed in the deepest mourning, but something stood on Fitzjohn's eyelids, which did not let him see as clearly as was his wont. But his mother's hand brushed away the truant drops that love of her had summoned, and he at once beheld before him one not less, though differently dear—Jane Graves.

The embrace of Lady Fitzjohn was a pretext for that of her fair companion. She did not refuse him the dear caress, and as he pressed her to his heart, he felt that he need not fear her refusal to accept it as a resting-place for life.

That Lady Fitzjohn pretended to mourn her late husband as one who wholly and deservedly had possessed her regard is not true. She was no hypocrite, but a warm and amiable creature, who, even when she had been most wronged, was most forgiving. In her manner she assumed no ridiculous appearance of a grief that must have been foreign to her heart, but contented herself with speaking of the dead, with that feeling that was conspicuous alike in every action, and a seriousness of manner which concurrent circumstances could not but call forth.

After a long conversation on their mutual affairs, and their past and present aspect, Fitzjohn particularly desired to know the name of the officer who had come from abroad. But both the ladies were especially tormenting in concealing the knowledge of one, who, as he said, must be known to half the world. Jane, however, at this only shook her head, and left the room, while Lady Fitzjohn inferred that her son's information on the point would in such case arrive speedily enough. He then asked, how, at this particular moment, Jane Graves happened to be beneath his mother's roof. The reply was, that she had been staying in Arlington Street for the last six weeks ; since Lady Fitzjohn had with some difficulty persuaded her, if only for the sake of health, to leave the too great quiet of the country, and endeavour in London, by more actively engaging the mind, to renovate the body. In this her ladyship's efforts had in

a great degree succeeded, interrupted only by the late melancholy events.

"And as for the swarms of suitors, my dear boy," added Lady Fitzjohn, "that the reports of her great wealth have caused to hover round her—they have been like the stars that appear with the moon."

"Egad, then, I must rise like the sun, my dear mother, and put the rascals out—must I not?"—"You had better lose no time, then, Fitz, if such is your intention. For in love, as in war, a very timid general is rarely a successful one."

"Tell me then, my dear mother, how do I stand in her good graces? Do you think I may venture to propose, without any chance of a refusal? I have tried to do so a thousand times, but something always chained the words upon my lips; and seriously speaking, it is a very awful business. Tell me, my dear mother, how do you think I shall be received?"

"Ah, my poor Augustus, this is indeed your first—first and only love—I clearly see, by that very question. You are, in truth, a novice, and if such a goose, as not to be able to discover the point in question yourself, you can neither expect nor deserve that one woman should tell tales out of school of another, even though she be your mother."

"Ah, you dear creature, with your never-fading eyes and cheeks," cried Fitz, placing his arm round Lady Fitzjohn's slender waist: "no wonder I have fallen rarely in love, when I have always had such a mother as you near me. But you are not so kind to me in this case as I would be to you. You know I'd help you to this gallant officer who came from '*foreign parts*,' if you'd only let me know who he is. Tell me now, would you say no, after the poor fellow has come so long a way on purpose? You, Jane, I, and he, might all be spliced together, some time hence. Come, now, *do* tell me who he is."

"Dear Augustus," said Lady Fitzjohn, blushing, "you forget in your wild banter what has so lately happened to us; and as for this gentleman you mention, perhaps you can tell me who *you* think he is, for he stands beside you."

Fitzjohn started, and turned round, and then discovered that while he had been thus playfully addressing Lady Fitzjohn, the door of an adjoining writing-room had, unseen to

him, been opened, and from it advanced a fine-looking but elderly man. This gentleman Fitzjohn then beheld, as his mother had said, at his side, and his surprise was not greater than his delight, when in the stranger he recognised his old and most esteemed good friend, Sir Edward —, of Bombay. Into which blank it is time that we insert his rightful name of Bouvery.

It was indeed Lady Fitzjohn's old lover, who had made his house the home of her son in India, and who now came across the dreary length of sea, to aid in righting them both, though at the abandonment of a most lucrative trust, the sacrifice of an old friendship, and even the exposure to danger in his own person.

Fitz, seizing both Sir Edward's hands, shook them most heartily, nor was he ever more rejoiced than in finding that he already loved one, whom he had long known to possess no slight interest in his mother's heart.

As soon as Fitzjohn got away from these dear friends to dress, he sent for his mother's abigail.

Wondering what could be required at her hands by the handsome captain, she came to his room in no slight perturbation.

"Oh, I wanted to ask you," said Fitz, very indifferently, and brushing his hair at the same time, "I wanted to ask whence you obtained the seal with which you closed the letter written to me by my mother's orders."

"Why, sir," replied the damsel, "I was unable to find one of my lady's seals, and seeing one in Mrs. Graves' desk, which was lying open on the table, I ventured, in my hurry, to use it without asking her permission, as she was not in the room—my lady's boudoir—at the time."—"Ah, very well—that's all."

The tiring woman having departed, Fitz turned out both the documents in question, and at once perceived that the same die had impressed both. The seal being perfectly plain, the mode in which this was found out was rather singular. A little flaw had occurred in the stone, which, passing down the surface, had left a mark like the English letter V; so that being the result of an accident and only perceptible on close examination, no doubt remained of the identity.

"With this proof," thought he, "of the noble and gener-

ous interest she has taken in my welfare, I think I *can* find courage to say those abominable words, which certainly are the hardest I ever yet had to utter.

He who watches for an opportunity, seldom watches long in vain. In the course of the evening more than one occurred: but Fitz, having screwed his courage up to the sticking-place, seized the first; and when assent at last removed each lingering doubt, his only wonder was that he had never been able to accomplish the "labour of love" before. But the fact of her being discovered in sending the money to his banker's, settled the affair; and though surprised at its discovery, Jane could not deny, and indeed afterwards acknowledged, that Mr. Jones was a nonentity, and that an old friend of her father's had transacted the whole business.

By the time that every important matter was arranged, a sufficient period had elapsed to allow of our hero's union without offering any impropriety to the memory of the departed; and Fitz now, in more serious mood, asked Lady Fitzjohn if she would not try to form one more likely to be happy than her first.

"My dear Augustus," replied her ladyship, "I'm sorry I cannot accept your offer."—Poor Fitz at this looked grave. "For the truth is, your friend Sir Edward asked me the very same question last night, and I was so foolish as to say yes, to him."

By special licence, then, in their own quiet home in Arlington Street, in the spring of the year following, were solemnized these two marriages. Jim Bell, by special request of his old friend, gave away Jane, to whom, as his fellow prisoner, he had once been of such important service.

For this good service Fitzjohn put into his hand on the morning of the ceremony, two pieces of parchment—one a commission appointing Mr. James Bell a commander in his Majesty's service, and the other a deed of annuity, secured on a rich estate in Ireland, giving to the said Master and Commander Bell, a life annuity of eight hundred a year, from Augustus Frederick Fitzjohn, Earl of Loughswilly.

It now only remains for me, reader, to tell you, that the marriages which that evening took place were, happily, exceptions to the many, and did not disappoint those who

entered into their sacred engagements. To say that they produced perfect felicity, would be at once to write nonsense and untruth; but I may fairly state that they certainly did produce as much happiness as it is either reasonable for mankind to expect, or possible for them to enjoy.

With all the intrinsic advantages of wealth and title, they had—as who has not?—their own recurring cares and annoyances; but these soon taught them this dear philosophy, learnt in no school save that of sorrow, and not to be priced by gold—that there is only allotted to mortals a certain portion of joy, with a much greater admixture of evil—that the wise course, therefore, is, thankfully to receive the former, bearing in mind the price which we must pay for it; and in suffering the latter, to remember that, in proportion as happiness has not preceded, it will the more surely follow it. But we must conclude.

Fitzjohn in his prosperity did not forget one of those friends who had known him in humbler times—his home was, to every possible extent, theirs; the superfluities of his purse he was always delighted to share with such as he found not unworthy of it, and the influence that rank and wealth procured for him at the Admiralty was ever ready to be exerted in the advancement of merit. The midshipman who had been taken prisoner with him, was one of the first who felt this; and Mr. and Mrs. Pipes annually came and paid him a Christmas visit.

In process of time our hero learnt to hear himself styled “Papa,” and the little rascal so naming him delighted in making hereditary—the cognomen of “GENTLEMAN JACK.”

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